

A FOREGONE CONCLUSION

BINYAMIN APPELBAUM

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WASHINGTON - Janet L. Yellen, President Barack Obama's nominee to lead the Federal Reserve for the next four years, sailed through a Senate confirmation hearing Thursday

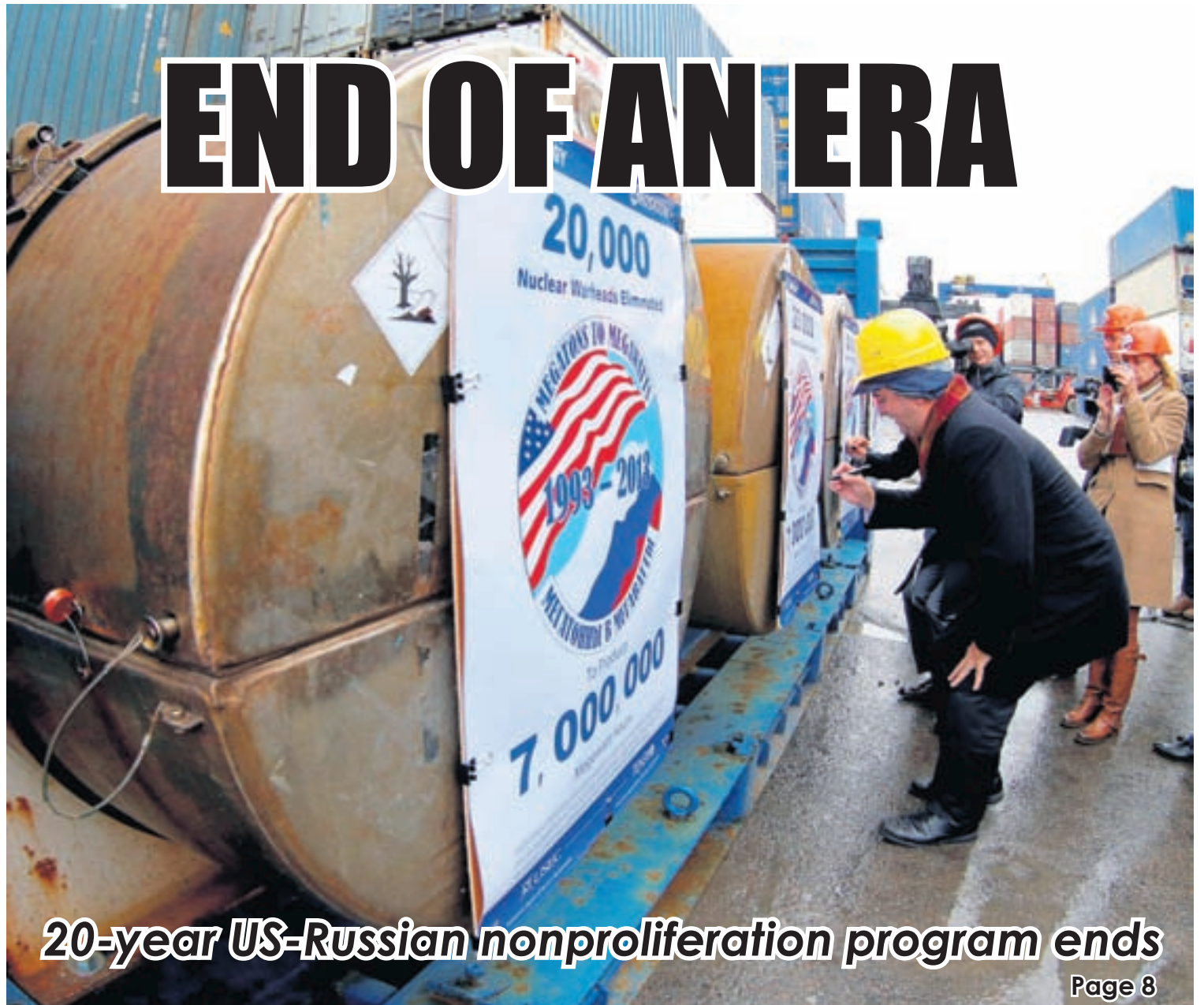


Janet Yellen sits for her nomination hearing on Capitol Hill, in Washington, Nov. 14, 2013. (Doug Mills/The New York Times)

as Republicans and Democrats mostly used the opportunity to raise broader concerns about income inequality and the regulation of large banks. Members of both parties appeared to treat Yellen's confirmation as a foregone conclusion. There were hardly any questions about Yellen's qualifications, and relatively few about her views on the Fed's efforts to stimulate the economy. But Yellen was subjected to a bipartisan barrage of criticism from senators concerned that the Fed is worsening income inequality through policies that mostly benefit the wealthy, and that it is doing little to help everyone else. "It's not clear to me and it's not clear to many Americans that have not seen a raise in many years that this policy raises incomes and wages on Main Street," said Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio. "What will you do to help?"

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END OF AN ERA



20-year US-Russian nonproliferation program ends

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Representatives of participating companies sign containers with uranium to be used as fuel for nuclear reactors, prior to loading them aboard Atlantic Navigator ship, on a port in St. Petersburg, Russia, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

A contrite Obama unveils a healthcare fix

**ASHLEY PARKER
MICHAEL D. SHEAR
ROBERT PEAR**

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WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama bowed to mounting political pressure from across the country and on Capitol Hill on Thursday and announced new rules that will let insurance companies keep people on health care plans that would not have been allowed under the Affordable Care Act. Obama, seeking to address an outcry that has shaken public confidence in the new health law, told reporters at the White House that the changes should al-

low most people to retain their health care plans for a year despite having received letters saying they could no longer keep their insurance.

"I completely get how upsetting this can be for a lot of Americans, particularly after assurances they heard from me that if they had a plan that they liked they could keep it," said Obama, who repeatedly took responsibility for the health care rollout, which has thrown Democrats on the defensive. "And to those Americans, I hear you loud and clear. I said that I would do everything we can to fix this problem.

And today I'm offering an idea that will help do it."

The president's plan would apply only to people who have had their existing policies canceled. Those currently without insurance would not be able to buy the old plans. Despite the president's reversal, Speaker John A. Boehner said that he intended to push ahead with a House vote Friday on a measure that would allow consumers to keep their canceled plans without penalty and allow others to sign up for them. Boehner said that he was skeptical of the president's plan, and that the new law needed to be overturned.

"The only way to fully protect the American people is to scrap this law once and for all," Boehner said. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leader in the House, said her members were clamoring for a fix on top of what the president was offering. Many of them, she said, were those who fought hard for the law's passage and want to see it saved. Other Democrats said they wanted a more permanent resolution of the cancellation issue, suggesting that Obama's plan would not quiet the clamor.

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Eurozone economy stalls as Germany and France backtrack

DAVID JOLLY

JACK EWING

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PARIS - The eurozone economy marked time in the third quarter of the year, growing just 0.1 percent from the second quarter, a report Thursday showed, disappointing hopes that a full-fledged recovery was taking hold after five years of recession and stagnation. The economy of the 17-country currency bloc stagnated as output slowed in Germany, Europe's largest economy, and declined in France, the second largest, Eurostat, the statistical agency of the European Union, reported Thursday from Luxembourg.

The report was in line with economists' expectations, and financial markets took the news in stride. European stocks rose about 0.7 percent, and the euro fell about 0.4 percent against the dollar early in the afternoon on the Continent. Jonathan Loynes, chief economist with Capital Economics in London, said the gross domestic product report was "a clear blow to hopes that the period of market stability seen over the last year or so would translate into a solid and sustained economic recovery."

He predicted that the eurozone economy would expand by around 0.5 percent next year, "well short of the rates needed to head off the growing dangers of deflation and address the region's ongoing debt crisis."

On an annualized basis, Europe's 0.4 percent growth compares poorly with the United States' annualized 2.8 percent third-quarter growth and the 1.9 percent that Japan reported Thursday. China, the world's fastest-growing major economy, expanded at a robust 7.8 percent rate in the third quarter.

The overall European Union, made up of 28 countries, grew 0.2 percent from the second quarter, and 1 percent on an annualized basis, Eurostat said.

There was some positive news, as Spain and the Netherlands broke out of

recession with 0.1 percent quarterly gains, and Britain led major EU economies with 0.8 percent growth. But Italy continued to limp along with a 0.1 percent quarterly contraction.

In Germany, growth slowed to 0.3 percent, as domestic consumption picked up and helped compensate for flat level of exports. Growth in the three months

that ended in September amounted to an annualized rate of 1.2 percent. That was slower than in the second quarter, when the German economy grew at an annualized rate of 2.8 percent, according to the Federal Statistical Office.

The French economy contracted 0.1 percent in the July to September period from the April to June

period, when it grew 0.5 percent, as business investment fell further, disappointing hopes for sustained recovery just months after the country broke out of a shallow recession.

The decline, at an annualized rate of about 0.4 percent, came as investment by nonfinancial companies fell by a quarterly 0.6 percent, after falling 0.4 per-

cent in the second quarter, according to INSEE, the national statistics institute. Spending by households decelerated, rising just 0.2 percent on a quarterly basis, from a 0.4 percent rise in the second quarter.. While the French figure was disappointing, it was only slightly worse than the consensus forecast of a 0.1 percent expansion..□



Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem speaks with the media as he arrives for a meeting of the eurogroup at the EU Council building in Brussels on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013, as finance ministers from the 17-country eurozone try to make progress on creating a banking union. The ministers need to agree before the end of the year on how to set up a fund to rescue banks.

(AP Photo/Virginia Mayo)

EU officials welcome end of aid for Ireland, Spain

DAVID McHUGH

JOHN DAHLBURG

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union officials welcomed the end of bailout support for Spain and Ireland, saying that showed the effectiveness of more than four years of efforts to cut excessive government debt.

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutchman who chairs the group of European finance ministers from the 17 countries using the euro, said Thursday "these economies are back on the road to recovery."

Ireland got 67.5 billion euros (\$91 billion) in a bailout after failing Irish banks ruined its finances. Spain tapped 41 billion euros of a possible 100 billion-euro credit line from the eurozone countries' bailout fund to recapitalize banks that faltered after a real estate boom collapsed. Both countries said they would not seek further aid. Ireland's aid program ends Dec. 15, Spain's in January. Greece, Portugal and Cyprus remain on international bailout support as a result of Europe's troubles with too much debt.

European officials stressed they still face many economic challenges. Growth is sluggish and levels of debt remain high in several countries. Greece in particular needs to

make more progress in straightening out its finances, they said.

Officials said the exit of Ireland and Spain from aid programs proved the correctness of the eurozone's basic approach: loans to keep struggling countries afloat, coupled with strictly enforced conditions to reform. "We have now had two successful experiences and I think this is very important," Dijsselbloem said.

The tough conditions, however, have helped worsen unemployment, deepen recessions and provoke social unrest as governments cut spending and raise taxes.

Eurozone finance ministers also discussed financial backstops after a yearlong review of bank finances by the European Central Bank turned up banks that need more financing. Dijsselbloem said those banks would have to raise money from financial markets or investors and get help from national governments only if that fails. If their home governments can't afford to help, only then could banks turn to the eurozone bailout fund, the ESM, under strict conditions.

Finance ministers from all 28 EU countries faced a tough discussion Friday on more wide-ranging measures to toughen oversight of banks and keep their troubles from hitting government finances.□

Bulger lands life for killings, racketeering

DENISE LAVOIE

AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Former Boston crime boss James "Whitey" Bulger was sentenced Thursday to life in prison for his murderous reign in the 1970s and '80s, bringing to a close a case that exposed FBI corruption so deep that many people across the city thought he would never be brought to justice.

Bulger, 84, said nothing in his own defense and was stone-faced as he learned his fate. He was defiant to the end, calling his trial on racketeering charges a sham and refusing to testify or provide information to probation officials preparing a sentencing report for the judge.

A jury convicted Bulger in August in a broad racketeering indictment that included murder, extortion, money-laundering and weapons charges. The jury convicted Bulger in 11 of the 19 killings he was charged with participating in but acquitted him of seven and could not reach a conclusion on an eighth. Judge Denise Casper heard testimony Wednesday from a dozen relatives among the 19 slaying victims. They called him a terrorist, a punk and even Satan. Prosecutors called him a sociopath.

On Thursday, Casper delivered a blistering speech before sentencing Bulger to two consecutive life sentences plus five years, as prosecutors had requested.

She called his crimes "almost unfathomable" and the human suffering he inflicted "agonizing to hear" and "painful to watch." She said at times during the trial she wished she and everyone else in the courtroom were watching a movie, because the horror described seemed unreal. She read off the names of Bulger's 11 victims. "Each of these lives came to an unceremonious end at your hands or at the hands of others at your direction," Casper said. □

US Secret Service facing another sex scandal

ALICIA A. CALDWELL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 18 months after a prostitution scandal in South America rocked the Secret Service, the agency in charge of protecting the president is investigating another case of suspected sexual misconduct in its ranks.

This time, two supervisory agents assigned to President Barack Obama's protective detail have been investigated for misconduct involving sexually suggestive emails sent to a female subordinate. The alleged misconduct does not appear to involve a breach of Obama's security.

According to The Washington Post, which first reported the inquiry Wednesday, supervisor Ignacio Zamora Jr. was reassigned. Timothy Barraclough, also a supervisor, remains with the presidential protection division. The agency started investigating Zamora this spring after hotel staff at the upscale Hay-Adams Hotel in Washington notified the Secret Service that a bullet from Zamora's weapon was found in a hotel room, a federal law enforcement official said. The woman in the room identified Zamora as the agent who left the bullet, the official said. The official spoke on the

condition of anonymity to discuss the internal investigation.

A subsequent internal investigation uncovered the emails from Zamora and Barraclough, the official said. The Secret Service said Thursday that the agency investigates all allegations of misconduct and takes action when appropriate. The agency said

curity Secretary Rand Beers about an internal report on the agency's culture during a hearing Thursday.

Beers, who was testifying before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on an unrelated topic, said he was expecting the report to be ready shortly. In the wake of the prostitution scandal in Cartagena,

Then Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan apologized for the scandal during a congressional hearing and promptly issued a variety of rule changes, including barring agents and officers from bringing foreign nationals back to their hotel rooms and requiring that agents not drink alcohol within 10 hours of the start of a shift.



A view of the Hay Adams Hotel, right, looking toward the White House in Washington, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013. Two U.S. Secret Service officers are under investigation and have been removed from President Barack Obama's detail following allegations of misconduct, according to The Washington Post. The investigation stems from an incident during the spring at the Hay-Adams Hotel, an upscale hotel steps away from the White House, involving a senior supervisor responsible for about two dozen agents in the presidential security detail.

(AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

neither agent would comment on the case.

News of the latest probe involving sexual misconduct prompted Sen. Ron Johnson, a Republican, to press acting Homeland Se-

Colombia, eight Secret Service employees were forced out of the agency, three were cleared of serious misconduct and at least two have been fighting to get their jobs back.

Sullivan retired earlier this year, and Obama named career agent Julia Preston as the first woman to head the elite agency, signaling a desire to change the culture of the service. □

Ex-FBI agent pleads guilty to being AP source

MICHAEL TARM

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A former FBI explosives expert was sentenced on Thursday to roughly 3½ years in prison for possessing and disclosing secret information, which he has said included intelligence he gave to The Associated Press for a story about a U.S. operation in Yemen in 2012.

The story on Yemen led to a federal leaks investigation and the seizure of AP phone records in the government's search for the information's source.

Donald Sachtleben, 55, pleaded guilty to one count of disclosing and one

count of possessing classified information. He was immediately sentenced by U.S. District Judge William T. Lawrence, who told the 25-year veteran of the FBI, "Clearly, you have betrayed your nation."

Lawrence said Sachtleben's career in law enforcement put him "on the front lines" helping to protect the United States, including participating in the investigation of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York.

"But you have also tarnished what ... was (your) incredible reputation," Lawrence said.

AP spokesman Paul Colford in New York said, "We

never comment on who our sources are."

At the same hearing, Lawrence sentenced Sachtleben to an additional eight years in prison in an unrelated child pornography case. He pleaded guilty to distributing and possessing pornographic images of underage girls.

Sachtleben delivered a more than 20-minute statement before he was sentenced. He apologized to family and friends, as well as former colleagues at the FBI for "breaking the bonds of trust" with them. He did not discuss his motives, though he said "it was never my intention to ever derive profit."

He partly blamed his actions on what he described as post-traumatic stress arising from his decades in the FBI participating in high-profile investigations, which also included the Oklahoma City bombing. He added he decided to promptly admit he leaked classified information after federal investigators approached him to prevent former co-workers from falling "under clouds of suspicion." "I wanted to ... make it absolutely clear that the crime I did was all on my own," he said.

Prosecutors did not broach Sachtleben's possible motive for the intelligence disclosures. □

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A contrite Obama unveils a healthcare fix

Continued from Front

The president's announcement also drew a cool reaction from insurers.

"Changing the rules after health plans have already met the requirements of the law could destabilize the market and result in higher premiums for consumers," said Karen M. Ignagni, the president of America's Health Insurance Plans, a trade group. "Premiums have already been set for next year based on an assumption about when consumers will be transitioning to the new marketplace. If now fewer younger and healthier people choose to purchase coverage in the exchange, premiums will increase, and there will be fewer choices for consumers."

A White House official confirmed that "we don't have

a commitment from state insurance commissioners" to go along with the president's new policy. State insurance regulators also

said they had not discussed it with the administration. In a nearly hourlong news conference, Obama repeatedly acknowledged

that the start of the new health care program had been botched. "I am very frustrated," Obama said in one of his

the myriad problems that his administration faces is "on me." He said he would have to work harder in the days and months ahead to win back his credibility with the American people.

On Friday, the Republican-controlled House is set to vote on a bill by Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, that would allow Americans to keep their existing health coverage through 2014 without penalties. That left the White House needing to act to avoid having large numbers of Democrats vote for the Republican legislation.

A similar proposal, led by Sen. Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., and backed by roughly half a dozen other Democrats, is also underway in the Senate. Landrieu's proposal would allow people to keep their current insurance permanently but, she said, is designed to encourage people to eventually switch to better insurance on the federal exchanges.

Some Senate Democrats said the president's changes did not go far enough and indicated that they would continue to support Landrieu's measure.

Senate Republicans criticized the changes as unlikely to fix problems with the health care law.

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said the president's move was "a political Band-Aid, not a permanent cure for millions of Americans who are losing their coverage and seeing their premiums skyrocket." □



President Barack Obama speaks about the Affordable Care Act during a news conference in the press room of the White House in Washington, Nov. 14, 2013. Obama bowed to mounting political pressure from across the country and on Capitol Hill on Thursday, announcing new rules that will let insurance companies keep people on health care plans that would not have been allowed under the Affordable Care Act.

(Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

most self-reflective moments since he moved into the Oval Office. "But I'm also somebody who, if I fumble the ball, I'm going to wait for the next play and then run as hard as I can to do right by the team."

The president said he did not intend to mislead Americans about whether they could keep their health insurance, but again expressed regret that his assurances turned out to be wrong. He attributed that to a poorly designed provision of the law. But he repeatedly said that

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Woman is found guilty of stalking actor Alec Baldwin



Genevieve Sabourin, the woman accused of stalking Alec Baldwin, during her trial in New York, Nov. 14, 2013. Sabourin was found guilty of stalking and other charges on Thursday.

(John Marshall Mantel/The New York Times)

JAMES C. MCKINLEY Jr
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NEW YORK - A judge on Thursday found a 41-year-old Canadian woman who says she had a brief affair with Alec Baldwin three years ago guilty of stalking and harassing the actor. She was sentenced to 210 days in jail and led from the courtroom in handcuffs. The judge's decision end-

ed a week of courtroom drama during which Baldwin took the stand to describe what he called a "nightmarish" ordeal with an obsessed stalker. The accused woman, Genevieve Sabourin, in turn, repeatedly disrupted the proceedings with loud outbursts, calling Baldwin a liar in open court and yelling vulgar insults at his wife,

Hilaria Thomas.

Sabourin, a freelance film publicist and aspiring actress, was unrepentant when Judge Robert Mandelbaum asked whether she had anything to say before sentencing. "I haven't done anything wrong," she said. "That's what I have to say. You are doing a mistake right now."

Mandelbaum said Sabourin had demonstrated "a complete lack of respect for the legal system" and had waged a "relentless and escalating campaign" to annoy and harass Baldwin and his wife. "The rules of civil society apply to you as to everyone else," he said.

Sabourin was found guilty in a bench trial without a jury of several misdemeanors: two counts of stalking,

and one count each of attempted aggravated harassment and harassment. She was also convicted of violating an order of protection for Baldwin and his wife, issued in May 2012, by sending threatening messages on Twitter to Thomas. The judge had already sentenced her to 30 day in jail this week for contempt of court, and gave her the maximum sentence available for the other charges: 180 days. □

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American plane pilot says passenger fell into ocean

MIAMI (AP) — A U.S. pilot says a passenger fell out of his small plane into the ocean off Miami.

Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen says the call came Thursday afternoon. The plane was flying at about 2,000 feet (609 meters) when the call came in, she said.

Coast Guard and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue air and water units were searching an area southeast of Tamiami Executive Airport, where the plane safely landed. It wasn't immediately clear where the flight originated or how many people were on board.

According to a recording on the website LiveATC. Net, the unidentified pilot calmly radioed "mayday, mayday, mayday," and told an air traffic controller

a door was ajar.

"I have a door ajar and a passenger that fell down. I'm six miles (9 kilometers) from Tamiami," the pilot says. "You said you've got a passenger that fell out of your plane?" the air traffic controller responds.

"That's correct, sir," the pilot responded. "He opened the back door and he just fell out the plane."

LiveATC.Net provides live air traffic-control broadcasts from control towers and radar facilities around the world.

Both the Coast Guard and fire rescue officials said it wasn't immediately confirmed that the pilot's emergency call was legitimate. The Miami-Dade Police Department sent detectives to the airport to further investigate, a spokeswoman said. □

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Fed itself is focus of Yellen's hearing

Continued from Front

Yellen, the Fed's vice chairwoman since 2010, fielded questions in a calm and careful manner. She said that the Fed was trying to help everyone, and that its efforts to hold down interest rates had provided clear benefits to car and home buyers.

big banks, a subject elevated to central importance by the financial crisis. Senators pressed Yellen to explain why the Fed was taking so long to impose new restrictions on large banks, and whether she considered the restrictions authorized by current law sufficient.

Yellen demurred on the last point, saying that she

failures had played a role in the crisis - something she has conceded in other contexts.

"I absolutely believe that our supervisory responsibilities are critical and they are just as important as monetary policy and we need to take them just as seriously," she said.

Yellen offered little new information about the Fed's



Janet Yellen, President Obama's nominee to lead the Federal Reserve, sits before the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee for her nomination hearing on Capitol Hill, in Washington, Nov. 14, 2013.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

"The ripple effects go through the economy and bring benefits to, I would say, all Americans," Yellen said.

She continued, "If we can generate more robust recovery in the context of price stability, then more Americans will see meaningful increases in their well-being."

Yellen said, however, that the divergence between rich and poor was a long-term trend mostly driven by factors well beyond the Fed's control.

Much of the hearing was devoted to regulation of

would withhold judgment until the process was complete.

Some of the strongest questions came from Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who criticized the Fed for regulatory failings before the crisis and expressed concern that it still was not trying hard enough.

"The truth is, if the regulators had done their jobs and reined in the banks, we wouldn't need to be talking about" stimulus, Warren said.

Yellen held her ground, avoiding even a clear statement that the Fed's

short-term plans, although she made clear that she remained a staunch supporter of its stimulus campaign.

She said that the Fed's continuing expansion of its holdings of Treasury securities and mortgage-backed securities, at a pace of \$85 billion a month, had "made a meaningful contribution to economic growth."

She also pushed back against concerns about the cost of those purchases.

"How long is too long?" asked Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho. □

US trade deficit widens 8 percent in September

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The

U.S. trade deficit widened in September as imports increased to the highest level in 10 months while exports slipped. The wider gap suggests growth was somewhat slower over the summer than previously estimated. The deficit increased to \$41.8 billion, up 8 percent from August, the Commerce Department said Thursday. It was the largest trade gap since May and marked the third straight month that the deficit has risen since hitting a four-year low in June.

Exports, which hit a record high in June, slipped for the third straight month, dipping 0.2 percent to \$188.9 billion. Sales of commercial aircraft and autos both declined. Imports rose 1.2 percent to \$230.7 billion, the highest level since November.

The deficit with China hit an all-time high of \$30.5 billion. The overall economy grew at an annual rate of 2.8 percent in the July-September quarter. An improving trade deficit contributed 0.3 percentage point to growth during that period. But Thursday's report shows that exports rose at a slower pace than the government estimated when it issued its report on third-quarter growth last week. That could wipe out trade's contribution to growth, economists say, and lead the government to reduce its estimate of third quarter growth to an annual rate of 2.5 percent.

So far this year, the deficit is running 11.7 percent below the pace of 2012. A smaller trade deficit acts as a boost to economic growth when it shows American companies are earning more in

their foreign sales and losing fewer domestic sales to foreign competitors.

Many economists say that growth has slowed in the current October-December quarter to perhaps below a 2 percent growth rate. They expect a rebound next year as the impact of this year's tax hikes and government spending cuts lessen.

U.S. manufacturers are hoping that rising export sales will provide a boost to offset weakness in domestic demand. Through the first nine months this year, exports are up a modest 1 percent. U.S. companies have had to deal with weakness in Europe, which has cut into sales in that important market. Through September, exports to the European Union were down 2.7 percent from the same period in 2012.

Imports are down 0.6 percent through September compared to the same period in 2012. Much of that decline reflects an 11.5 percent drop in petroleum imports. The U.S. is being helped on the energy front by rising U.S. production which is lessening America's dependence on foreign oil. The price of imported crude oil is also lower this year, averaging \$97.52 per barrel through September, down from \$102.25 for the same period in 2012.

For September, U.S. exports of farm products showed a solid gain, led by stronger sales of soybeans, corn and wheat. But sales of manufactured goods such as aircraft, autos and computers were down. On the import side, imports of oil were up 2.7 percent and imports of foreign-made cars and auto parts rose were up 3.4 percent. Imports of food were down. □

US Financial Front:

American unemployment benefit applications dip to 339K

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits slipped 2,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 339,000, the fifth straight decline that shows businesses see little need to cut jobs.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the less volatile four-week average fell 5,750 to 344,000. The average has dropped 11 percent in the past year.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs. They have fallen back near pre-recession levels this month after spiking in early October because of the partial government shutdown and processing backlogs in California.

The steady declines are the latest sign that companies are firing fewer workers.

And last week's report on hiring and unemployment in October showed that businesses are also hiring workers at a steady pace. Employers added 204,000 jobs last month, many more

than expected and a sign that companies shrugged off the 16-day shutdown. Private businesses added 212,000 positions, the most since February.

Many economists had thought the unemployment benefit applications would fall even lower. The four-week average remains about 10,000 higher than it was in August.

"While it is disappointing that layoffs have not fallen further, the good news is that the government shutdown appears not to have generated a lasting negative impact on labor markets," Guy Berger, an economist at RBS, said in a research note.

Companies have stepped up hiring as growth has picked up.

Employers added an average of 202,000 jobs per month from August through October.

That's up sharply from an average of 146,000 in May through July.

The economy expanded at a 2.8 percent annual rate in the July-September



Applicants listen to a speaker's bull horn instructions for attending a combined Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Harlem Week job and career fair in New York. The Labor Department reported on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013, that the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits slipped 2,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 339,000.

(AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

quarter, up from a 2.5 percent rate in the previous quarter and just a 1.1 percent rate in the first three months of the year.

Solid job gains should support steady growth in the coming months. Greater hiring, combined with mod-

est increases in pay, could encourage Americans to spend more. Consumer spending drives roughly 70 percent of economic activity.

Still, the unemployment rate ticked up to 7.3 percent last month from 7.2

percent in September. But that was partly because many federal workers were temporarily laid off during the shutdown.

About 3.9 million people received benefits in the week ending Oct. 26, the latest data available. □

US worker productivity rises at a modest pace

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. workers increased their productivity from July through September at roughly the same modest pace as the previous three months. Steady gains in productivity could dissuade companies from ramping up hiring.

The Labor Department said Thursday that productivity increased at a 1.9 percent annual rate in the third quarter, about the same as the 1.8 percent rate in the previous quarter. The second quarter figure was lower than the 2.3 percent rate previously estimated.

Productivity measures the amount of output per hour worked. Greater productivity raises living standards because it enables companies to pay workers more without spurring infla-

tion. And it's a good sign for corporate profits.

But more productive workers also show companies that they are getting steady gains from their existing labor forces and needn't add more employees.

Labor costs fell in the third quarter, a sign that inflation will remain mild.

Productivity growth is flat over the past year. But that's because the gains from the past six months have been offset by declines in previous six months. Worker productivity is improving partly because economic growth has accelerated. The economy expanded at a 2.8 percent annual rate in the third quarter, up from 2.5 percent in the previous quarter. At the same time, hiring has been only modest. □

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20-year US-Russian nonproliferation program ends

VITNIJA SALDAVA
Associated Press
ST. PETERSBURG, Russia
(AP) — A 20-year program to convert highly enriched uranium from dismantled

Russian nuclear weapons into fuel for U.S. power plants ended Thursday, with the final shipment loaded onto a vessel in St. Petersburg's port.

The U.S. Energy Department described the program, commonly known as Megatons to Megawatts, as one of the most successful nuclear nonproliferation

partnerships ever undertaken. The agreement, signed in 1993 shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and always scheduled to

end in 2013, gave Russia the financial incentive to dismantle thousands of nuclear weapons. The initial aim was to help keep the vast stockpiles of weapons-grade uranium out of the hands of terrorists and to make sure Russia's nuclear workers got paid at a time when the country was nearly bankrupt.

Under the program, 500 metric tons of highly enriched uranium, the equivalent of about 20,000 nuclear warheads, was converted into fuel for U.S. nuclear reactors. During the past 15 years, the fuel has generated 10 percent of U.S. electricity, or nearly half of all commercial nuclear energy.

"For two decades, one in 10 light bulbs in America has been powered by nuclear material from Russian nuclear warheads," U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in a statement. While monitored by the U.S. and Russian governments, the contract has been carried out by two commercial companies: the United States Enrichment Corporation and Techsnabexport.

Rick Shannon, president of Atlantic Ro-Ro Carriers, the company in charge of shipping for this program, said he expects the U.S. will continue to purchase low-enriched uranium derived from Russian nuclear stockpiles.

"Shipments of this type are critical to continue," he said. "As to how they continue and what the commercial version will be, it will a little bit different than right now."

Russia is still estimated to have hundreds of tons of highly enriched uranium, far more than is needed to maintain its nuclear arsenal. □



Trucks carrying containers with uranium to be used as fuel for nuclear reactors line up for loading them, on a port in St. Petersburg, Russia, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013.

(AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

French parish priest kidnapped in north Cameroon

ELAINE GANLEY
Associated Press
PARIS (AP) — A French priest was kidnapped from his northern Cameroon parish home by heavily armed men in a region where the radical Islamic sect Boko Haram operates, eyewitnesses and French officials said Thursday. The gunmen fired into the air as they fled on motorbikes with their captive, one witness said. Georges Vandenbeusch was kidnapped in the region of Koza, in the extreme north of the coun-

try, some 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the border with Nigeria. The zone has been flagged as a risk for terrorism and kidnapping, but the priest chose to stay on to "exercise his mission," the French Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said it was trying to verify the identity of the gunmen and circumstances of the kidnapping, which eye witnesses said happened late Wednesday. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the deputy prefect of the region, Ouhe Kolonde, said Boko Haram was suspected.

The group has waged a campaign of bombings and shootings across Nigeria's north. They are held responsible for more than 790 deaths last year, and many dozens more this year. Earlier this year a French expatriate family with four young children were kidnapped at gunpoint in Cameroon's far north and held for two months by Boko Haram, reportedly in neighboring Nigeria. "For some time now they've been attacking Christians

in the area," Kolonde said. A nun at the compound said the kidnapers were looking for money. Sister Francoise Mukarabayire said there were 12 armed and masked men came inside, dressed in civilian clothing, and a dozen more were outside. Another witness said they came on motorbikes. "Around 11 p.m. I heard someone knocking on the door. I didn't open it. A few seconds later they broke the window and opened the door. They asked for money. □



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Toronto mayor denies latest round of allegations

ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Toronto's mayor denied Thursday that he pressured a female employee for oral sex, in an obscenity-laced statement on live television in which he also threatened to take legal action against former staffers who spoke to police about his drinking and drug use.

Rob Ford, who admitted last week to smoking crack, later announced he was getting professional help. But he once again refused to step down and used a typical mix of contrition and defiance in several public appearances Thursday. He wore a football jersey to a City Council session, where outraged councilors turned their backs each time he spoke and again called on him to step aside.

Later, Councilor Karen Stintz said the city has suspended all school trips to City Hall indefinitely because staff deemed it unsafe.

Ford drew gasps from reporters Thursday morning when he used an obscenity as he denied telling a staffer he wanted to have oral sex.

"I've never said that in my life to her, I would never do that," Ford said on live television.

The father of two school-age children said he is "happily married" and used crude language to say he enjoys enough oral sex at home.

Ford later apologized for his remarks at a news conference.



Mayor Rob Ford reacts at city council members regarding new allegations against him in Toronto on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013. Ford is threatening to take legal action against former aides who told police about their concerns about his drug use and drunken driving. He also denies making sexual advances toward a female staffer.

(AP Photo/The Canadian Press, Nathan Denette)

ference.

He explained he was pushed "over the line" by newly released court documents that included allegations against him involving cocaine, escorts and prostitution. He called the allegations "100 per cent lies."

He said his integrity as a father and husband had been attacked, prompting him to "see red."

"I acted on complete impulse in my remarks," Ford said.

Ford also said he didn't want to comment on the particulars of the health care support he's receiving and asked for privacy for his family.

The mayor said he would take legal action against his former chief of staff, Mark Towhey and two other aides over their interviews with police that were detailed in court documents released Wednesday. □

Serbia's top tycoon on trial for embezzlement

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — A Serbian tycoon pleaded not guilty on Thursday to charges of embezzlement and tax evasion at the start of a trial that the government sees as an important step in efforts to curb corruption.

Miroslav Miskovic, once considered as one of the most influential people in Serbia with close political ties, faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted by Serbia's anti-corruption court. Also on trial is Miskovic's son, Marko, and nine others.

The indictment alleges that the group siphoned off millions of dollars from a privatized road construction company in 2005-2010. They are also accused of evading taxes.

Miskovic, one of the richest people in impoverished Serbia, is the owner of Delta Holding, one of the biggest companies in the region. The company has retail, real estate, insurance and agriculture businesses in Serbia and the rest of the Balkans.

When Miskovic was arrested

in December, government officials said it demonstrated that no one was untouchable in the anti-corruption sweep. Serbia must fight graft to move closer to EU membership. Miskovic was released from detention months later after posting a record 12 million euros (\$16 million) bail. His legal team has invited foreign experts to observe the trial.

Zdenko Tomanovic, a lawyer for Miskovic, claimed the charges were baseless. "What these men are ac-

cused of is not a crime anywhere in the world," he said.

Miskovic, 68, created his business empire under the late strongman Slobodan Milosevic in the 1990s, and expanded it after the leader's ouster in 2000. Miskovic's wealth in 2007 was estimated at some \$2 billion but is believed to have grown since then.

Miskovic briefly served as Serbia's deputy prime minister under Milosevic in 1990 when the Balkans started sliding into a civil war.

In Philippine relief efforts, China outdone by Ikea

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The outpouring of international aid to the Philippines makes China's contribution for typhoon relief look like a trickle: Several countries and even Swedish furniture chain Ikea have done more than the world's second-largest economy. That won't help Beijing's campaign to win over neighbors with its soft power.

China has pledged less than \$2 million in cash and materials, compared to \$20 million provided by the United States, which also launched a massive military-driven rescue operation that includes an aircraft carrier.

Another Chinese rival, Japan, has pledged \$10 million and offered to send troops, ships and planes. Australia is giving \$28 million, and Ikea has offered \$2.7 million through its charitable foundation.

China's reluctance to give more — driven by a bitter feud with Manila over overlapping claims in the South China Sea — dents its global image at a time when it is vying with Washington for regional influence.

"China has missed an excellent opportunity to show itself as a responsible power and to generate goodwill," said Zheng Yongnian, a China politics expert at the National University of Singapore. "They still lack

strategic thinking."

The decline of American influence in Asia, with China filling the vacuum, has been predicted for years. Asian nations have become increasingly dependent on China's booming

other non-traditional forms of diplomacy, of which emergency assistance is a major component.

Despite Chinese academics' frequent promotion of soft power, Chinese leaders don't really get it, said

each from the government and the Chinese Red Cross, and it is sending an additional \$1.64 million in tents, blankets and other goods. Meanwhile, the USS George Washington aircraft carrier arrived off the Philippine

In the devastated town of Tacloban, U.S. Air Force Capt. Jon Shames took a break from work on a damaged airstrip, and said he was "thankful" for the opportunity. "I hope that in my time of immense loss somebody will come and help me as well. I can tell you this is a global effort," he said.

Beijing's tepid response to the disaster shows how its feud with Manila over territory — fed by a constant drumbeat of invective from the government and state media — is metastasizing to all areas of its interactions with the Philippines.

Though Beijing's sea claims overlap with Vietnam and others, it has singled out the Philippines, apparently because of Manila's energetic assertions of its own claims. Beijing was enraged by Manila's decision to send the dispute to international arbitration and constantly rails against its close military alliance with the U.S.

China's generosity with the Philippines hasn't entirely dried up. It pledged \$80,000 to the Philippines last month following a major earthquake there, in addition to this week's pledges. And President Xi Jinping expressed his sympathy to his Philippine counterpart Benigno Aquino in the latest disaster, although a five full days later and without mentioning assistance. □



A Chinese man checks his mobile phone near a huge screen showing a news report of the deployment of U.S. aircraft carrier USS George Washington to typhoon-hit Philippines to support humanitarian assistance efforts, in Beijing, China Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013. The outpouring of international aid to the Philippines makes China's contribution for typhoon relief look like a trickle — and that won't help Beijing's campaign to win over neighbors with its soft power.

(AP Photo/Andy Wong)

economy to purchase their exports, and Chinese companies are increasingly providers of investment and employment.

Yet, China lags far behind the U.S. in the sphere of soft power — the winning of hearts and minds through culture, education, and

Zheng. Instead, they continue to rely on the levers of old-fashioned major-nation diplomacy based on economic and military might. "They still think they can get their way through coercion," Zheng said.

China's donations to Philippines include \$100,000

coast Thursday, and 1,000 troops were expected on the ground in the disaster zone by the end of the week. U.S. planes and choppers carried in supplies and flew out survivors. "We are operating 24-7," Marine Capt. Cassandra Gesecki said.

Armed men burn records of El Salvador war missing

MARCOS ALEMAN

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Armed men broke into a nonprofit agency that works to locate children missing from El Salvador's civil war and set fire to the group's archives, national fire officials said Thursday.

The intruders also stole computers during the early morning attack that burned four offices, in which investigators could smell combustible fluid, fire Sgt. Armando Pineda said. The Probusqueda Asso-

ciation for Missing Children has received nearly 1,000 complaints about children separated from their families during the U.S.-backed 1980-92 war between the Salvadoran government and leftist guerrillas.

It says it has helped at least 235 people, many adopted in the United States or Europe, locate their birth parents.

"This is clear sabotage on our work," director Ester Alvarenga said, adding that she had not yet been allowed to check the burned offices. □

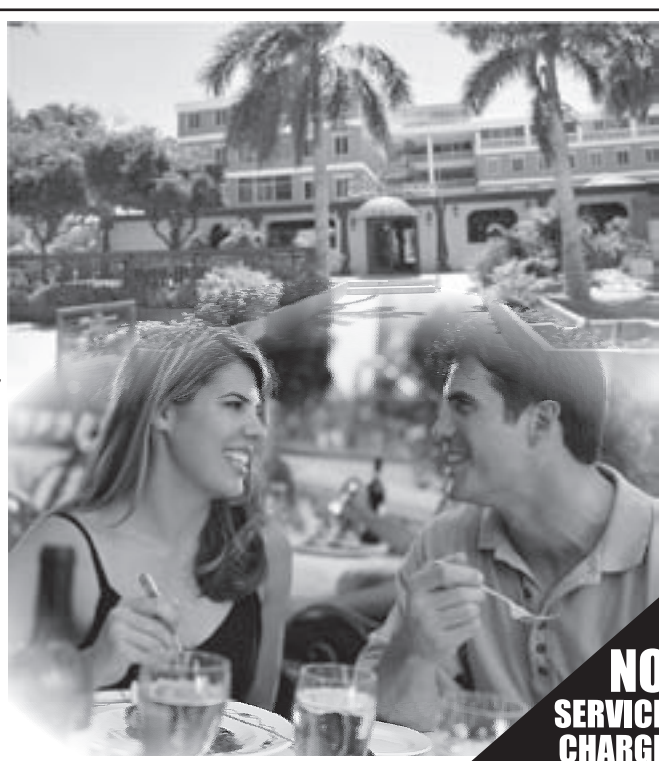
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Egypt rolls out the red carpet for Russian dignitaries



This image released by the Egyptian Presidency shows interim President Adly Mansour, center meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, center left, Defense Minister Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, fourth from right, and Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy, third from right, in Cairo, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013. Egypt's foreign minister sought to downplay speculation of a major foreign policy shift, saying during a rare top-level Russian visit on Thursday that Cairo wants to boost ties with Moscow and not replace the United States as its key ally. (AP Photo/Egyptian Presidency)

MAGGIE MICHAEL
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — In an echo of the Cold War, Egypt gave the red carpet welcome Thursday to senior Russian officials aiming to expand Moscow's influence through military and economic cooperation with a key U.S. ally in the Middle East. The flirtation underscores how U.S.-Egyptian relations have soured lately over the Obama administration's criticism of the July 3 military coup. And although Egyptian officials say the one-time Soviet client is not turning away from the United States, the military-

backed government is clearly signaling it has options. Egypt's Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy sought to downplay speculation of a major foreign policy shift, describing the visit by Russian's foreign and defense ministers as an "activation" of existing ties and speaking positively of cooperation between the two countries "in multiple fields."

But the fact that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shogiu arrived in Cairo weeks after the United States froze millions of dollars in military aid is significant. The officials gave

no details about any arms deals being discussed. Russia's Interfax news agency recently quoted an unidentified official of the state Rosoboron export arms trader as saying that

there are no plans to sign big contracts during the Cairo talks. It said Egypt has shown interest in purchasing Russian air defense missile systems and MiG-29 fighter jets,

combat helicopters and other weapons. But it quoted an unnamed official dealing with arms trade as saying that no big deals are expected in the near future as Egypt currently can't afford it.

However, a retired Egyptian military general who maintains close ties to the present army leadership said Egypt was inching close to signing a \$2 billion deal with Russia for the purchase of 24 MiG fighter-jets as well as anti-tank missiles and an air-defense system. "Do you want us to take the (U.S.) slap on our face and remain silent? Of course not," said the retired general, Hossam Sweilam. "This pressure is not acceptable, so we returned to the Russians to maintain our fighting capabilities."

Tensions are high between Egypt and the U.S. — its chief foreign backer and benefactor since the 1970s, since the ouster of Morsi, Egypt's first freely elected president, and the subsequent crackdown on his Islamist supporters that has left hundreds dead and thousands arrested. □

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Canada says 386 kids rescued in child porn bust

CHARMAINE NORONHA
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A sweeping child pornography investigation has led to the rescue of 386 children around the world and the arrest of 348 people, Canadian police said Thursday. Toronto police describe the Project Spade operation as one of the largest child porn busts they've ever seen.

"It is alleged that officers seized hundreds of thousands of videos detailing horrific sexual acts against very young children, some of the worst that they have ever viewed," Inspector Joanna Beaven-Desjardins said.

Police said 108 people were arrested in Canada and 76 in the U.S. Others were arrested in other

countries. School teachers, doctors and actors were among those arrested.

Police said the children were "rescued from child exploitation" but did not give more details.

Beaven-Desjardins said the investigation began with a Toronto man accused of running a company since 2005 that distributed child pornography videos.

Police allege Brian Way, 42, instructed people around the world to create the videos of children ranging from 5 to 12 years of age, then distributed the videos via his company, Azov Films, to international customers. The videos included naked boys from Germany, Romania and Ukraine, which it marketed as naturist movies and claimed were legal in Canada and the United

States.

Police said they executed a search warrant at Way's company and home, seizing about 1,000 pieces of evidence: computers, servers, DVD burners, a video editing suite and hundreds of movies.

Way was charged with 24 offences, including child pornography.

He is in jail. Police also designated Azov Films as a criminal organization, charging Way with giving directions on behalf of a gang. Beaven-Desjardins said this is the first time in Canada that anyone has been charged with being a part of a criminal organization in regards to child pornography.

Police said they began their investigation in 2010 and worked with Interpol

in more than 50 countries including Australia, Spain, Mexico, Norway and Greece.

"This operation shows that international police cooperation works.

Despite large amounts of material and that this is time-consuming work, this shows that the Internet is not a safe haven for crimes against children," Norwegian police spokesman Bjørn-Erik Ludvigsen said in a statement.

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service said it began its investigation by accessing the company website and making undercover purchases.

Beaven-Desjardins said the investigation is ongoing and believes more arrests will be made. □

German firm found liable in implants case

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A French commercial court on Thursday ordered a German product-testing company to pay damages to more than 1,600 women and six distributors after ruling that it failed to properly check silicone breast implants that turned out to be prone to leakage.

The court in southeastern Toulon ordered TUEV Rheinland to pay yet-to-be-determined damages to plaintiffs seeking at least 50 million euros (\$67.2 million). Experts will now decide the appropriate damage award — a process expected to take months.

TUEV has denied responsibility and plans to appeal.

The trial was part of a string of cases centered on the now-bankrupt French implant vendor Poly Implant Prothese (PIP), whose founder and several former employees are facing a criminal trial in nearby Marseille over claims the company used cheap silicone to fill tens of thousands of implants that were prone to ruptures and leaking. A verdict is expected in that case on Dec. 10.

Because PIP is bankrupt, the 5,000 women who have joined a complaint against the French company aren't likely to retrieve much compensation. But TUEV Rheinland, a leader in the industry which was charged with checking the quality of the implants, has deep pockets.

Plaintiff lawyers argued that the French unit of TUEV Rheinland that conducted the inspections was competent for inspecting home appliances like vacuum cleaners and washing machines — not silicone breast implants.

Laurent Gaudon, a patients' lawyer, called the ruling "a great victory. The court has been audacious by deciding important compensation for PIP victims." □

Bird flu strain infects human for 1st time

MARIA CHENG
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — A strain of bird flu that scientists thought could not infect people has shown up in a Taiwanese woman, a nasty surprise that shows scientists must do more to spot worrisome flu strains before they ignite a global outbreak, doctors say.

On a more hopeful front, two pharmaceuticals separately reported encouraging results from human tests of a possible vaccine against a different type of bird flu that has been spreading in China since first being identified last spring, which is feared to have pandemic potential.

The woman, 20, was hospitalized in May with a lung infection. After being treated with Tamiflu and antibiotics, she was released. One of her throat swabs was sent to the Taiwan Centres for Disease Control. Experts there identified it as the H6N1 bird flu, widely circulating in chickens on the island.

The patient, who was not identified, worked in a deli and had no known connection to live birds. Investigators couldn't figure out how she was infected. But

they noted several of her close family and friends also developed flu-like symptoms after spending time with her, though none tested positive for H6N1. The research was published online Thursday in the journal *Lancet Respiratory*

none has so far mutated into a form able to spread easily among people.

"The question again is what would it take for these viruses to evolve into a pandemic strain?" wrote Marion Koopmans, a virologist at the National Institute

tempt to guess which flu strains might be troublesome for humans — but neither H6N1 nor H7N9 make birds very sick.

Koopmans called for increased surveillance of animal flu viruses and more research into predicting which viruses might cause a global crisis.

"We can surely do better than to have human beings as sentinels," she wrote.

The vaccine news is on the H7N9 bird flu that has infected at least 137 people and killed at least 45 since last spring. Scientists from Novavax Inc., a Gaithersburg, Maryland, company, say tests on 284 people suggest that after two shots of the vaccine, most made antibodies at a level that usually confers protection.

"They gave a third of the usual dose and yet had antibodies in over 80 percent," said an expert not connected with the work, Dr. Greg Poland of the Mayo Clinic. "This is encouraging news. We've struggled to make vaccines quickly enough against novel viruses," he said.

Results were published online Wednesday by the *New England Journal of Medicine*. □



A close-up of the eye of a chicken kept in a cage waiting to be inspected by health workers in Hong Kong.

(Associated Press)

Medicine.

Since the H5N1 bird flu strain first broke out in southern China in 1996, public health officials have been nervously monitoring its progress — it has so far killed more than 600 people, mostly in Asia. Several other bird flu strains, including H7N9, which was first identified in China in April, have also caused concern but

for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands, in a commentary accompanying the new report.

She said it was worrying that scientists had no early warning signals that such new bird flus could be a problem until humans fell ill. Scientists often monitor birds to see which viruses are killing them, in an at-



Passions on the Beach and Jordan Vineyards delivers an exquisite Culinary Experience!

-Hosted by Courtney Cataruzolo, Regional Sales Director, Jordan Vineyard.

EAGLE BEACH - The charming Courtney Cataruzolo, who travels the world to promote the Jordan winery, and the dedicated team of Arion Wine Company NV, hosted the recent wine and food pairing at Passions on the Beach and received many warm accolades from food and wine aficionados who congregated



on the sugary white sands, sipping a nice selection from the high-ranking Jordan brand, while savoring a wonderful five-course dinner.

The evening started with a reception on the beachside deck at the Amsterdam Manor on Eagle

Beach just past sunset, and continued toes-in-the-sand, to the soft sound of guitar music, under the twinkling lights of the old kwihi trees, in an unforgettable tropical ambiance. The chef of Passions on the Beach created an excellent menu to go with the award winning Jordan wines, imported to Aruba by Arion Wine Company NV. During the reception, party-goers enjoyed an amuse of quinoa salad, cucumber, fresh mint and olive oil, goat cheese, poached pineapple and green apple with almond butter chased by a 2011 Mouton Cadet Sauvignon Blanc, from Bordeaux France.

As guests got seated for dinner, the appetizer was

served: Layers of smoked salmon and poached grouper wrapped in grilled zucchini, served with a parsley aioli paired with 2010 Jordan Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, California. The much-anticipated main course featured a petit filet mignon, with traditional Bordelaise sauce, on a bed of roasted garlic mashed potatoes and green asparagus, paired with 2003 Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, Sonoma County, California.

Marc Giesbers, the resort's director of Food & Beverage was especially proud of the innovative dessert serving dark chocolate cake with aged-balsamic-sea-salt accompanied with red fruit macedoine and toasted pistachios, paired with 2004 Jordan



Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, Sonoma County, California.

During dinner Courtney, who is a trained hospitality executive by profession, explained that Jordan Vineyards specialize solely in the production of ultra-premium, vintage dated Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay from Sonoma County, California. For 30 years, Jordan has consistently produced elegant, approachable, age-worthy wines, since the initial release of its Cabernet Sauvignon (vintage 1976)



in 1980.

Govert van de Hout, Arion Wine Company NV, was especially pleased that Jordan came to Aruba to promote brand awareness, appreciation and demand, going through his company where fine wines are hand sold to preferred local customers.

Arion Wine Company, exclusive importer of Jordan to Aruba informs that the wine delivers exceptional quality for a fair price, and that it is one of the top selling Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay wines in the US, rated overall #5 as the best selling brand in America's favorite restaurants. □



At Amazonia Churrascaria: M& M host a lovely rehearsal dinner!



PALM BEACH - Mark & Mona entertained family members and friends at Amazonia Churrascaria on the eve of their wedding, enjoying sumptuous dinner and drinks in a relaxed and contemporary setting. The lovebirds who are staying at the Radisson Aruba Resort & Casino, have known each other for almost eight years. They both loved the idea of getting married on Aruba and picked Renaissance Private Island just before sunset as the perfect stage for the big event. It is after all their third visit here,



and they know their way around! Vida and Maria, the mothers-in-law report it was love at first sight for the groom and his lovely bride, and instant harmony and understanding between the respective family members. And Mark will probably never forget his

anniversary, because their wedding day, 11/12/13 is really easy to remember! Enjoy your wedding and enjoy your life together. Amazonia Churrascaria would love to host you again, as Mr. & Mrs. Colley-acme, on your first anniversary, 11.12.14! □

**Beauty
On The
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Katie Howard

She is from Cleveland, Ohio, and it's her first time in Aruba. She loves the Beach and the local people. She is staying at the Radisson Beach Resort.

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This Sunday at MooMba Beach: 5th Duo Xtreme Mountainbike Competition to get sunny start!



PALM BEACH - The mountainbikers who participate in the upcoming 5th annual Duo Xtreme Mountainbike competition this Sunday are in for a treat: after their early-morning start from the parking lot at Hadicurari, they are expected back there around noon where a delicious lunch is waiting to be devoured by the hungry athletes. At 2 pm the award ceremony will be held and several DJ's will be enter-

taining the crowd until fabulous salsa band Tsunami takes over at 6 pm. Tsunami's show coincides with MooMba's Happy Hour, so you can catch two flies with one stone that way. By the way, during the entire day there will be an Amstel Bright Bucket special (buy 5, get 6). So come on down to MooMba Beach to mingle with the athletes and enjoy the action on the beach. □

A Warm Bugaloe Welcome to Anthony and JennLapenta!

PALM BEACH - Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill is welcoming back guests of the week Anthony and JennLapenta from Rocky Hill, Connecticut. They have been coming to Aruba since 2000 and discovered Bugaloe in '07. Since then Bugaloe became their favorite place on Aruba to hang out. They love sitting at the bar enjoying the beautiful atmosphere and crazy bartenders. Their perfect vacation includes the ocean, sun, shopping and partying, which is what they do a lot at Bugaloe! Their favorite menu item is the grilled grouper and with a few mojito's and margarita's their day is complete. Anthony and Jen's funniest memory of Bugaloe is when one of the bartenders JC played a reverend and married another bartender on the beach, probably one of the most romantic events that ever happened in Bugaloe History;-)! Their favorite band is the Equator band performing every Sunday night live. A perfect setting while the sun sets in the ocean. The Bugaloe crew would like to thank Anthony and Jenn for being such loyal Bugaloe guests and hope to see them for another 13 years to come! .□



3 minutes Walking Distance to the beach

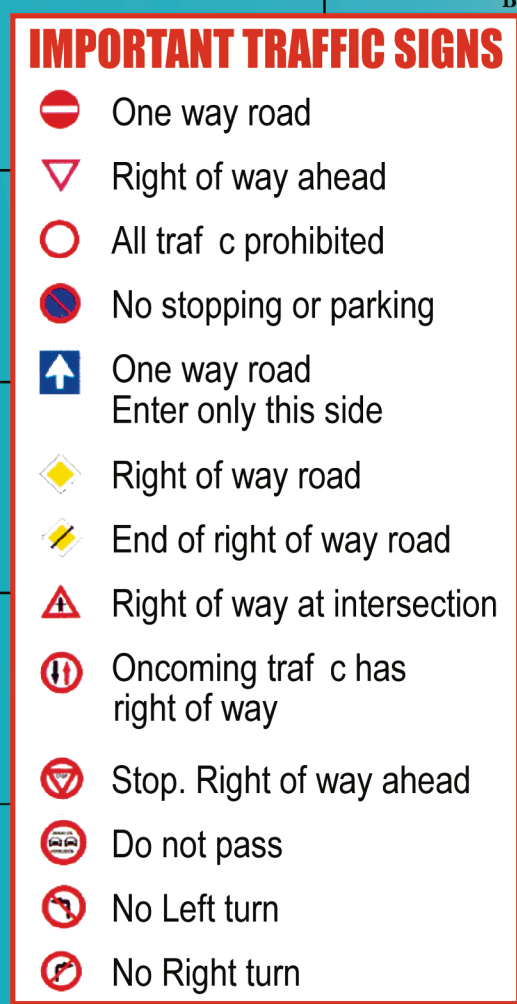
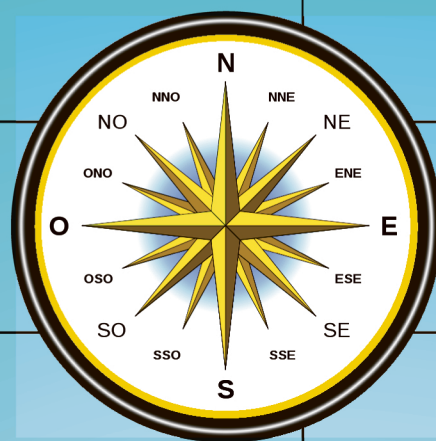
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APNewsBreak: Phelps says he's keeping options open

EDDIE PELLIS
PAUL NEWBERRY
AP National Writers

Michael Phelps has re-joined the U.S. drug-testing program, the strongest signal yet that he's planning a comeback for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Phelps told The Associated Press on Thursday that "nothing is set in stone" though clearly he has enjoyed getting back into shape — he's down about 15 pounds (7 kilograms) — and working out with his former team at the North Baltimore Aquatic Club.

"If I decide to keep going and swim again, then I'll compete," Phelps told the AP in an exclusive telephone interview from Minneapolis, where he is attending the Arena Grand Prix this weekend.

"If I don't," he added, letting out a big laugh, "I guess I'll re-retire. Just don't compare me to Brett Favre."

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agen-



In this March 2007, file photo, U.S. swimming star Michael Phelps, left, walks with his coach Bob Bowman during a training session at the World Swimming Championships in Melbourne, Australia. Associated Press

cy said Phelps was among the athletes who underwent doping tests in the third quarter, the period ending Sept. 30. He was tested twice.

His former coach and close friend, Bob Bowman, said Phelps actually re-entered the program near the end of the second quarter, but he wasn't tested and therefore wasn't listed that time in USADA's quarterly report. He would be eligible to compete again in March, according to Bowman. Each week, Phelps said, he's working out for a couple of days in the pool, a couple of days in the weight room, and one or two days on his core training.

"I just think he's in a place where he's feeling good about swimming," Bowman said. "If he chooses to compete, he's got some time. I like having the ability to do it."

Continued on Page 20



In this Sept. 22, 2013, file photo, Houston Texans free safety Ed Reed watches during a break in play in the second half of an NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, in Baltimore. Associated Press

Jets sign 9-time Pro Bowl safety Ed Reed

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.
AP Sports Writer
FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)

— Rex Ryan bolted out of his office the moment he heard Ed Reed was cut. He wanted to make sure general manager John Idzik knew one of his favorite players was available for the New York Jets to pursue.

"It's only a rumor that I pulled a hamstring," Ryan said with a big grin. "That's not true."

The Jets signed the nine-time Pro Bowl safety Thurs-

day, bringing one of the NFL's greatest playmaking defensive players to a secondary on a defense that ranks 24th against the pass. The 35-year-old Reed was released Tuesday by Houston, cleared waivers Wednesday and joined less than 24 hours later.

"John had a big smile on his face," Ryan said of the Jets' GM. "I think he anticipated it, but he had already beaten me to the punch. He had already set it in motion with our scouts."

Reed joined his new Jets teammates on the practice field wearing a green No. 22 jersey; his familiar No. 20 is currently worn by cornerback Kyle Wilson. Reed laughed when he was asked if he thinks he's got anything left.

"I don't think I'd be here if they didn't think that," he said after his first practice with the Jets. "I know what I know. I know how I feel and I know what I've put in my offseason workouts."

Continued on Page 21

Wild beats Maple Leafs 2-1 after shootout

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP)

— Zach Parise and Jason Pominville scored in the shootout, lifting the Minnesota Wild to a 2-1 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs on Wednesday night. NHL Capsules Parise tied the game late in the third period for Minnesota, which has won five of six and is 8-1-2 in its last 11.

The Wild have been involved in three straight shootouts — winning two. Mason Raymond scored a power-play goal for Toronto, which has scored just three regulation goals in its last four outings. Jonathan Bernier had 33 saves.

Josh Harding had 19 saves for the Wild in relief of Niklas Backstrom, who was run over by Toronto's Nazem Kadri 7 minutes into the game.

Kadri's elbow appeared to hit Backstrom in the head. Kadri was also assessed a match penalty for illegally

hitting Mikael Granlund in the head in the second period and likely faces a long suspension.

FLYERS 2, PENGUINS 1

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Brayden Schenn scored two goals and backup goalie Ray Emery stopped 30 shots to lead the Philadelphia Flyers in a 2-1 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday night for their third straight victory.

Schenn, who had a goal and an assist during Philadelphia's 5-0 win against Ottawa the previous night, opened the scoring late in the first period and got the tiebreaker late in the second.

Emery got the start one night after Steve Mason shut out the Senators.

Penguins captain Sidney Crosby scored his ninth goal of the season, and first in eight games. Marc-Andre Fleury made 19 saves for Pittsburgh, which has lost three straight for the



Minnesota Wild left wing Zach Parise (11) scores on Toronto Maple Leafs goalie Jonathan Bernier in the shootout of an NHL hockey game in St. Paul, Minn., Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013. The Wild won 2-1. Associated Press

second time this season.

STARS 3, OILERS 0

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP)

— Kari Lehtonen stopped 22 shots for his 23rd career shutout to lead Dallas.

Rich Peverley, Antoine Roussel and Tyler Seguin scored for the Stars, who

have won four of their last five games.

The Oilers have lost four straight and are 1-8-1 in their last 10 games.

Edmonton was also blanked at home for the third consecutive game, setting a new franchise re-

cord, and has totaled just two goals in the last five on home ice.

Peverley got the Stars on the scoreboard with 9:15 left in the second period when he knocked in a rebound of his own shot for his fourth goal of the season. □



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CASINO AND SHOPS

Griffin leads Clippers over Thunder in grudge game

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Blake Griffin had 22 points and 12 rebounds after being involved in a first-half scuffle that resulted in two ejections, sparking the Los Angeles Clippers to a 111-103 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Wednesday night.

Serge Ibaka of the Thunder and Matt Barnes of the Clippers were ejected, and Griffin received a technical foul for his part in the altercation with 6 seconds left in the second quarter. Kevin Durant had 33 points, making 15 of 17 free throws, and 10 assists to lead the Thunder, who had won four straight. Russell Westbrook added 19 points and 10 assists.

Jamal Crawford scored 20 points off the bench for the Clippers, who had six players in double figures while winning their third in a row. DeAndre Jordan and J.J. Redick scored 15 each, and Chris Paul had 14 points and 16 assists. 76ERS 123, ROCKETS 117, OT

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tony Wroten had his first career triple-double, James



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Serge Ibaka, left, blocks a shot by Los Angeles Clippers forward Blake Griffin, center, with Thunder guard Thabo Sefolosha, right, of Switzerland, picking up a foul on the play in the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013, in Los Angeles. A scuffle ensued, and Ibaka and Clippers forward Matt Barnes were ejected.

Associated Press

Anderson scored a career-high 36 points and Spencer Hawes made the

go-ahead basket with 34 seconds left in overtime to help Philadelphia beat

Houston.

Wroten had career highs with 18 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists in his first start for injured rookie Michael Carter-Williams, who didn't play because of a bruised left arch.

Jeremy Lin scored 34 points, making a career-best nine 3-pointers. Dwight Howard had 23 points and 15 rebounds, and Chandler Parsons added 22 points for Houston.

Lin started for James Harden, who was out of Houston's lineup because of a bruised left foot.

TIMBERWOLVES 124, CAVALIERS 95

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Kevin Love had 33 points, eight rebounds and six assists, Ricky Rubio added 16 points and a career-high 16 assists, and Minnesota beat Cleveland Cavaliers. Corey Brewer scored 27 points for Minnesota while filling in for Kevin Martin, who was out with an illness, and the Timberwolves outscored Cleveland 29-6 in transition points to run the Cavaliers out of the building.

Kyrie Irving scored 20 points on 8-for-17 shooting and

survived a nasty collision in the first quarter for the Cavaliers. Anderson Varejao had 13 points and five rebounds starting for Andrew Bynum, who missed the game for personal reasons. The Cavs fell to 0-6 on the road this season.

SPURS 92, WIZARDS 79

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tony Parker had 16 points, leading six Spurs in double figures, and San Antonio rolled over Washington.

Boris Diaw had 15 points, Kawhi Leonard added 13 points, and Manu Ginobili and Marco Belinelli each had 10 for San Antonio. Tiago Splitter had 12 points and nine rebounds.

Martell Webster had 21 points, Bradley Beal added 19 points and John Wall had 14 points and eight assists for Washington, which has lost three straight. The Spurs held a double digit lead for all but about 15 minutes in remaining undefeated at home.

KNICKS 95, HAWKS 91

ATLANTA (AP) — Carmelo Anthony continued his success against Atlanta by scoring 25 points and New York regrouped after blowing a 17-point lead. □

Phelps

Continued from Page 18

To be perfectly honest, he's not anywhere near being able to compete in a meet or anything like that. We're just getting started on improving his fitness. We'll see where that goes."

By subjecting himself to drug testing, Phelps has given himself plenty of time to go through an entire season before the next major meet, the 2015 world championships in Russia, an important stepping-stone to the Rio Games the following summer.

FINA requires an athlete to be tested for at least nine months before taking part in sanctioned events.

"This may not go anywhere," Bowman said. "We don't have an event picked out or anything like that. There's no grand scheme. It just sort of

makes sense that he can make some choices if he wants to."

Further stoking speculation about a comeback, Phelps turned up at the meet in Minneapolis and even did some laps in the diving well.

"I just splashed around a little bit," he said. "The guys are swimming laps around me. But at least I'm exercising and trying to get back into some respectable shape."

Phelps attended the world championships in Barcelona last summer, but he seemed even more pumped about being on hand for one of the more mundane events.

"I just wanted to come up here and see how a meet was," he said. "This is kind of like a normal meet. Barcelona was not a normal meet."

That's a big boy meet. Just being around this is exciting for me. It really has



Former Olympic and world swimming champion Michael Phelps of the US unveils a mosaic installed in his honor at the FINA Swimming World Championships in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, July 28, 2013.

Associated Press

been a part of my life ever since I was a kid."

Phelps is the most decorated athlete in Olympic history. He captured 18

gold medals and 22 medals overall at the last three Summer Games, shattering the previous marks. He is best known for breaking

Mark Spitz's record for a single Olympics by winning eight gold medals in Beijing in 2008.

Phelps retired at age 27 after winning six more medals at last summer's London Olympics, adamant that he had no intention of competing again. But he's moving close to a comeback.

"If I do really start getting excited and wanting to do it, I can make that choice," Phelps said. "If not, at least it's something we can say we were prepared for."

Phelps doesn't need the money, of course, having earned tens of millions of dollars in endorsements during his career, and he remains a marketable name, even in retirement. If he does come back, it will likely be another case of an athlete who simply missed the thrill of competition, the day-to-day grind of proving himself against other top swimmers. □

Kershaw, Scherzer easily win Cy Young Awards

BEN WALKER

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Clayton Kershaw of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Max Scherzer of the Detroit Tigers have won baseball's Cy Young pitching awards.

Kershaw won the prize as the National League's best pitcher for the second time in three seasons after leading the majors with a 1.83 ERA.

"This is such a cool thing. I can't even explain what it means to me," Kershaw said in an interview on MLB Network. "It really is a huge honor." The 25-year-old lefty with a big-breaking curve drew 29 of 30 first-place votes from members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Adam Wainwright of the St. Louis Cardinals was picked first on one ballot.

Kershaw won 16 of 25 games and topped the NL with 232 strikeouts. He also won the Cy Young Award in 2011 and finished sec-

ond last year to knuckleballer R.A. Dickey.

Scherzer took the AL honor after leading the majors with 21 wins. He received 28 of 30 first-place votes.

The right-hander lost only three times and was the lone 20-game winner in baseball. He ranked second in the majors with 240 strikeouts and was fifth in the AL with a 2.90 ERA.

Scherzer smiled and raised both arms when the results were announced.

"It's unbelievable. It just vindicates everything I've done," he said, acknowledging all the run support he received from Detroit's powerful lineup probably helped his candidacy.

"I've been working so hard all these years to get better and better," he added. "I think I took a big step forward in 2013."

Yu Darvish of the Texas Rangers was second, marking the highest finish by a Japanese-born pitcher in Cy Young voting. Hisashi



In this Aug. 29, 2013, file photo, Detroit Tigers' Max Scherzer watches a pitch to an Oakland Athletics batter in the first inning of a baseball game in Detroit. Scherzer won the American League Cy Young Award on Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013.

Associated Press



In this Sept. 22, 2013, file photo, Houston Texans free safety Ed Reed watches during a break in play in the second half of an NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

Iwakuma of the Seattle Mariners came in third.

Wainwright went 19-9 for St. Louis and finished behind Kershaw. Miami right-hander Jose Fernandez, picked earlier this week as the NL Rookie of the Year, was third.

Kershaw's win marked the record 11th time a Dodgers pitcher has won the Cy Young since the award was first presented in 1956. Sandy Koufax won three times, and the Hall of Fame lefty has developed a friendship with Kershaw.

Voting for the Cy Youngs was done before the playoffs began. Kershaw went 1-0 in two sharp starts against Atlanta in the division series, then lost twice to St. Louis in the NL championship. The Cardinals tagged him in a 9-0 romp in the clinching Game 6.

"We came up short. I didn't pitch the way I should have in the last game," he said. Kershaw has been an All-Star the past three seasons and put up eye-popping statistics. Now, he said, the only thing left for him to do is win the World Series.

"I want that ring," he said. Wainwright, still looking for his first Cy Young Award, has been runner-up twice. The 29-year-old Scherzer won his first 13 decisions of the season, made the All-Star team for the first time and started for the AL.

He helped pitch the Tigers to their third straight AL Central title, joined in a deep rotation by Justin Verlander, the 2011 AL Cy Young Award winner, Anibal Sanchez and Doug Fister.

Scherzer went 16-7 last year, then added a curveball to an impressive repertoire that already included a hard fastball, slider and changeup.

He twice beat Oakland in the AL division series, then went 0-1 in two starts against Boston in the AL championship series — he was pulled both times with the Tigers ahead.

Scherzer is distinctive for more than just his record. His eyes are different colors, with the right blue and left brown. □

Ed Reed

Continued from Page 18

I'm ready to go. You'll see. "You guys can be the judge of it."

The Jets released outside linebacker Ricky Sapp to make room on the roster for Reed.

Ryan and defensive coordinator Dennis Thurman coached Reed for eight years in Baltimore. Reed has always been a favorite of Ryan, who once labeled him the greatest safety to play the game. While his physical skills no longer make him one of the game's elite players, Reed will be able to serve as a leader in the secondary and help bring along young safeties Antonio Allen, Jaiquawn Jarrett and Josh Bush.

"This had nothing to do with sentiment," Ryan said. "We believe that Ed will be a great signing for us and he's going to help this football team, without question."

Reed said New England also showed interest, as

well as one other team, but everything seemed right about coming to the Jets.

"It just fits," he said. "I know the system. Rex was like, 'Go ahead and let's see what you've got.'"

The fact that the Jets (5-4) are in the playoff hunt was also a plus.

"That's a huge factor," Reed said. "It was a huge factor in playing this year, in general, being with a team that was going to contend and be in the playoffs."

There's a good chance Reed will be ready to play Sunday at Buffalo, at least in certain situations, and it is a low-risk, high-reward situation for the Jets.

"We've had some issues with the deep ball," Ryan said.

"Let them throw it there now."

Reed would like to start, of course, but added that he's fine with whatever the coaches want him to do, including playing in dime packages or special teams.

"They had a good thing

going before I came," Reed said. "I don't plan on rocking the boat."

That was a bit of an issue in Houston, as Reed missed the Texans' first two games after offseason hip surgery and was relegated to a backup role, making just 16 tackles with no interceptions.

He was unhappy about not starting after signing a three-year, \$15 million deal in the offseason following 11 years in Baltimore. Reed also criticized the team for being outplayed and out-coached after the Texans' seventh straight loss last Sunday.

"To put it simple for you," Reed said, "it wasn't a good fit."

Reed, who won a Super Bowl last season with the Ravens, was the NFL's top defensive player in 2004. In 11-plus seasons, the ballhawking Reed has 61 interceptions, including seven returned for touchdowns. He's a five-time first-team All-Pro who also holds the NFL record with 1,541 yards on interception returns. His nine career postseason in-

terceptions, including one in the Ravens' Super Bowl win, tie him for the league mark.

Reed said recent criticism of him has come as a result of being held to higher standards than most safeties.

"I created that monster, and I've been blessed to create that monster," he said. "I love it."

Reed had a whirlwind 24 hours, which began with him working out in Georgia when he cleared waivers around 4 p.m. Wednesday. Less than six hours later, he was on a plane to New Jersey.

"We had him at hello," Thurman said.

Reed met with Idzik before going to bed around 2:30 a.m., and then heading back to the facility after a few hours of sleep.

"We put him in some defenses just to see what he could remember with his partner (Dawan) Landry out there," Ryan said. "It was like, 'Whoa, here we go.'"

"It was like he hadn't missed a beat." □

Possible immunity for cyclists, but not Armstrong

GERALD IMRAY
AP Sports Writer

JOHANNESBURG (AP) —

Cyclists could be offered immunity to testify in the planned inquiry into the sport's drug-stained past — but it won't apply to Lance Armstrong, the World Anti-Doping Agency said on Thursday.

A revision of the world anti-doping code, which is set to be voted on and adopted by WADA on the last day of its summit in South Africa on Friday, may contain a new provision for current cyclists to testify under the incentive of no ban in return for what they know about doping, WADA President John Fahey said.

It will work on a "case by case" basis, Fahey said, and apply only to riders currently competing and therefore not Armstrong.

"What is concluded is concluded," he said of Armstrong, who was banned for life in 2012 and stripped of his seven Tour de France titles for serial doping.

Speculation has grown over the last week that the disgraced American cyclist may seek a reduction in his life ban from organized sport in return for cooper-



UCI President Brian Cookson speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Johannesburg, South Africa, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013. Cycling's governing body and the World Anti-Doping Agency have an agreement on an independent commission to look into the sport's drug-stained past, and Lance Armstrong will be invited to take part, UCI President Brian Cookson told The Associated Press.

Associated Press

ating in an International Cycling Union investigation into doping.

While a reduced ban remains a possibility, he won't have his sanction completely removed or have the relatively short bans of other riders, WADA and UCI President Brian Cookson have said.

Fahey also explained a legal principle that meant the code's possible new clause allowing testimony in return for no sanction could be applied to the

cycling inquiry, planned for next year, even though the code won't come into effect until Jan. 1, 2015.

It follows comments from Cookson that there should be "incentives" for some people to testify in the commission, which will go ahead after an agreement between the UCI and WADA and following a private meeting between Cookson and Fahey at this week's World Conference on Doping in Sport.

Providing little details of the

inquiry and its remit, WADA and the cycling governing body said in a joint statement that they have agreed on "the broad terms under which the UCI will conduct a commission of inquiry into the historical doping problems in cycling."

"They (Cookson and Fahey) further agreed that their respective colleagues would cooperate to finalize the detailed terms and conditions of the inquiry to ensure that the procedures and ultimate outcomes would be in line with the fundamental rules and principles of the world anti-doping code."

That agreement saw WADA make progress in one of the key behind-the-scenes discussions at its conference, although revelations of problems with the doping laboratory in Russia, three months ahead of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, have given WADA another burning issue.

WADA has set up a disciplinary committee to investigate issues with its accredited Moscow lab, Fahey told the AP, and a report was expected "in the not too distant future."

WADA has already revoked the accreditation of the Brazilian laboratory that was meant to test samples at next year's World Cup, giving the two major sports events next year problems with their drug testing facilities.

"There is a matter that is being looked at at the present time with respect of the Russian laboratory," Fahey said, declining to give further details on the exact nature of the problems.

WADA regularly checks that its labs are working properly by sending them "blind samples," samples meant as tests to ensure the lab is giving correct findings, and not false positives or false negatives. Any incorrect findings would raise concerns.

The Moscow lab is set to provide the facilities for a temporary testing base in Sochi for the Feb 7-23 Winter Olympics.

Meanwhile, concerns over Jamaica and Kenya are also still on the WADA agenda at its four-day meeting, and its board will examine an audit of Jamaica's drug-testing program on Friday. □



In this May 30, 2010, file photo, Dario Franchitti, center, of Scotland, celebrates at the start-finish line with his wife Ashley Judd, and car owner Chip Ganassi, right, after winning the Indianapolis 500 auto race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

Three-time Indianapolis 500 winner Dario Franchitti said on Thursday that doctors have told him he can

no longer race because of injuries sustained in an IndyCar crash last month.

Franchitti broke his spine and right ankle and suffered a concussion in the

Doctors tell Franchitti he can no longer race

Oct. 6 crash at Houston. The crash occurred on the last lap when his car made contact with another car and went sailing into a fence.

The 40-year-old Franchitti underwent two surgeries on his ankle and recently returned home to Scotland to recover.

"One month removed from the crash and based upon the expert advice of the doctors who have treated and assessed my head and spinal injuries post accident, it is their best medical opinion that I must stop racing," Franchitti said. "They have made it very clear that the risks involved in further racing are too great and could be detrimental

to my long-term well-being. Based on this medical advice, I have no choice but to stop."

The four-time IndyCar champion has been the face of the series since he returned in 2009 following a brief stint in NASCAR. He won three consecutive titles from 2009 to 2011, and two of his three Indy 500 wins.

Franchitti had crossover appeal for the IndyCar Series through his 11-year marriage to actress Ashley Judd, which ended in January. But he was personable, well-spoken, popular in the paddock and passionate about the series. It resonated with fans and made Franchitti one of In-

dyCar's all-time greats.

Franchitti's 31 victories are tied for eighth on the all-time list, and his 33 poles are sixth on the all-time list. "Dario Franchitti has done so much for Target Chip Ganassi Racing, so it will be very disappointing to not see him in our cars next season," Ganassi said. "But simply put, Dario is a motorsports legend and will be sorely missed on the race track by everyone in the paddock and in the stands. His contributions to the sport of motor racing are too many to list, but I can tell you that they go way beyond what he has done on the track." □

After Nokia, a mobile games boom in Finland

MATTI HUUHTANEN

Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — From mobile phones to mobile games.

Finland has found there's life after Nokia in a bustling startup scene that's produced hugely popular game apps from "Angry Birds" to "Clash of Clans." Mobile gaming is fast becoming the Nordic country's new flagship export industry, with revenues expected to double to 2 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) this year.

About 150 game developers were showcasing their ideas to global investors this week at the annual Slush conference — a hot-spot for startups in Europe. The conference, which ended Thursday, has tripled in size from 2012, with investors representing venture capital funding worth more than \$60 billion.

"The whole startup thing here is amazing," said New Zealander Duane Atkins, a former Nokia engineer who founded a startup of seven people in Helsinki providing software for social networks.

Many Finns hope startups in general and game developers in particular will preserve Finland's position as a high-tech hub as an era ends with the sale of the phone division of Nokia — once the industry bellwether — to Microsoft.



CEO Duane Atkins of Ezyinsights company poses at the leading company startup conference "Slush" event in Helsinki, Finland, on Wednesday Nov. 13, 2013. Finland has found there's life after Nokia in a bustling startup scene as Slush brings together the early-stage startup scene in the Northern Europe and Russia region along with top-tier angel investors and venture capitalists from Europe and the U.S.

Associated Press

Although still small compared with Nokia, which in its prime had annual revenues of more than 30 billion euros, the games industry employs some 2,200 people in more than 180 companies nationwide. According to UBM Tech, a global business information and data company, Finland ranked third in a survey

this year of 300 leading European game developers who were asked where in Europe they thought the best games would come from five years from now. Only Germany and Britain — much bigger countries — ranked higher. Finland's neighbor Sweden ranked fourth.

One of the most buzzed-about Finnish game developers is Supercell, creator of "Clash of Clans" and "Hay Day" — top-grossing apps for Apple's iOS software in more than 100 countries.

Supercell started making the games for tablets in 2011 with half a dozen people. Last month, the company announced it was selling a 51 percent stake to Japanese investors for \$1.5 billion.

Supercell chief Ilkka Paananen said Finns have focused too much on Nokia, a company that became a symbol of the small nation's successes and failures.

"There will never be another Nokia, and there shouldn't be. We need to

spread knowhow much more broadly," Paananen told The Associated Press, adding Supercell wants to invest in Finnish startups to help newcomers who show promise.

"We have so much talent here that there's no reason why we can't make this a new Silicon Valley," he said. "It won't be the same as in the U.S. but nevertheless a regional hub — just as it seems to be already becoming."

An older company in the fast-changing industry, where success is often counted in months rather than years, is Rovio Entertainment, whose "Angry Birds" became an instant smash hit after its release in December 2009. At Slush on Thursday, Rovio's chief marketing officer Peter Vesterbacka announced that the game has been downloaded 2 billion times.

Founded in 2003 in Espoo near the Nokia headquarters, Rovio has turned into an international franchise that employs more than 700 people worldwide,

including in the United States, China, Japan and Britain.

Many smaller startups are hoping for similar success at the annual Slush event, which has also caught the attention of senior political leaders.

Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen, accompanied on stage by the deputy prime minister of neighboring Russia — a major investor in startups — opened the event by appealing to the audience "to open their minds to new trends." Antonio Conati Barbaro, the head of Alleantia, an Italian firm that provides cloud-based software for computers, said he believes Finland — a country of 5.3 million with long, dark winters — is the right place to sense trends in the industry. Last year, the Finnish government spent more than 135 million euros on startups.

"I have visited many startup meetings in Europe, but this is a must," he said. "And you can see the Finns are taking startups seriously." □

Google, HP halt sales of Chromebook 11

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)

— Google and Hewlett-Packard are halting sales of their recently released Chromebook 11 computer after some users reported the device's charger has been overheating.

The precautionary measure announced Wednesday comes slightly more than a month after Google Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co. unveiled the Chromebook 11 as a more affordable alternative to laptop computers with similar features.

The Chromebook has a dis-

play screen that measures 11.6 inches (29.5 centimeters) diagonally and sells for \$279.

Google says it is working with the Consumer Product Safety Commission on how to fix the overheating issue with the Chromebook's charger.

For now, Google is advising people who already bought the Chromebook 11 to use other USB chargers that fit the computer. The Chromebook 11 can also be re-charged with power cords that work with many mobile devices. □

Hunt for safety drives Wall Street to record high

KEN SWEET

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Not all record days on the stock market are created equal. Major U.S. indexes rose to all-time highs for the second day in a row Thursday,

are saying the market has risen too far, too fast given the sluggish state of the U.S. economy.

"The legion of people in the last three months who think this market has topped out has grown sig-

nificantly," said JJ Kinahan, chief strategist at TD Ameritrade. However, Kinahan said the general tendency for the market is still to move higher.

Across the market, the most popular names were "defensive" stocks, ones that are seen as more likely to hold up in a downturn. Northeast Utilities, New England's largest utility, rose 2 percent. Oil refining

company Valero Energy rose 4 percent and life insurance company MetLife increased 3 percent.

The Dow Jones utility index, which is made up of 15 large utility companies, rose 1 percent, double the

company Valero Energy added 8.62 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,790.62. Both were record highs. The Nasdaq composite edged up 7.16 points, or 0.2 percent, to 3,972.74. Network equipment maker Cisco Systems plunged after predicting a slump in sales, pulling other large technology companies down. Cisco sank \$2.63, or 11 percent, to \$21.36, Hewlett-Packard lost \$1.42, or 5 percent, to \$25.07 and Oracle fell 62 cents, or 2 percent, to \$34.38.

Cisco, which relies heavily on government contracts, said its revenue for the current quarter could fall as much as 10 percent from the same period a year ago. The company's chief executive, John Chambers, blamed budget gridlock in Washington, which resulted in a partial shutdown of the federal government for 16 days and a near-breach of the nation's borrowing limit.

"The shutdown, debt ceiling negotiations and delay of key decisions exasperated the lack of confidence among business leaders," Chambers said in a conference call with analysts. Investors pay close attention to what Cisco says because it's considered a proxy for business spending on technology. Cisco manufactures equipment that makes up the backbone of the Internet such as routers and servers. □



A woman has her photo taken with characters The Man in the Yellow Hat and Curious George outside the Nasdaq MarketSite, before the Houghton Mifflin IPO, in New York's Times Square, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

but the gains were driven by stocks that investors tend to buy when they want to avoid risk, such as power companies, banks and drug makers.

The flight to less-volatile stocks and those that pay bigger-than-average dividends suggested that investors are becoming more cautious after a 26 percent surge in the market this year. More investors

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Across the market, the most popular names were "defensive" stocks, ones that are seen as more likely to hold up in a downturn. Northeast Utilities, New England's largest utility, rose 2 percent. Oil refining

gain in the broader market. On the flip side, small-company stocks, which are viewed as more risky than larger, more established companies, were the only major category of stocks to fall. The Russell 2000 index edged lower.

The Dow Jones industrial average gained 54.59 points, or 0.4 percent, to 15,876.22, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index

McDonald's is brewing global coffee growth

NEW YORK (AP) — McDonald's wants to be a bigger player in the global coffee business.

The world's biggest hamburger chain on Thursday highlighted beverages as one of its key growth opportunities at a daylong presentation for investors.

McDonald's CEO Don Thompson noted that coffee is the fastest growing category in its global drinks business and noted that the company has less than its "fair share" of the market. When asked to identify competitors in the space, Thompson chose to keep the discussion broad.

"Anyone that stops off to get a cup of coffee anywhere, that's an opportunity," Thompson said.

The push comes as Starbucks Corp. continues to enjoy strong sales growth, despite the lackluster economy that other chains have blamed for underwhelming results. In the latest quarter, for example, Starbucks said global sales rose 7 percent at locations open at least a year. The figure edged up 0.9 percent for McDonald's.

This fall, McDonald's added a pumpkin spice latte to its roster of McCafe coffee drinks; Starbucks has had a version for years.

Starbucks, meanwhile, is stepping up its food business. The Seattle-based company recently revamped its sandwiches and introduced new salads and baked goods to become more of a lunch destination. About a third of purchases in the U.S. include food and Starbucks is looking to push that figure up. But Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz doesn't like comparisons to chains such as McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts.

"They're in another business — they're fast-food," Schultz said in an interview on CNBC earlier this year.

Overseas, McDonald's also has about 4,200 separate McCafes that are either sectioned off from the main restaurant or stand-alone locations. □

Fairholme offers to buy Fannie, Freddie businesses

WASHINGTON (AP) — An investment firm is offering to buy from the government core businesses of mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in a \$52 billion deal. Fairholme Capital Management made the proposal Wednesday to the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which oversees Fannie and Freddie. The government rescued the two companies in the financial crisis in September 2008 with taxpayer aid totaling \$187 billion.

Fannie and Freddie buy mortgages from lenders, package them as securities, guarantee them

against default and sell them to investors.

Miami-based Fairholme says it would lead a group of investors to buy the guarantee businesses of the companies. The firm says that would be sufficient to back about \$1 trillion in new mortgages.

The Obama administration is seeking to wind down Fannie and Freddie.

An agency spokeswoman declined comment on the proposal. The goal of the Obama plan is to replace Fannie and Freddie with a system that would put the private sector, not the government, primarily

at risk for the loans. That would spread the risk over numerous companies. The government would still be involved, both in oversight and as a last-resort loan guarantor. The White House also wants a guarantee that private lenders will make sure homeowners have access to 30-year fixed mortgages.

Fairholme said its proposal would end government control of Fannie and Freddie and government backing for new mortgages. It would create two private insurance companies to buy the mortgage securities guarantee businesses

of Fannie and Freddie. The new companies would have no federal charter or special status, and the names Fannie and Freddie would be ended.

It is unclear whether the Fairholme proposal would fit with the administration's plan. Government officials have said previously that a small group of investment firms taking on such a large risk of mortgage defaults would open the possibility of the government having to bail out the firms if they failed. The gradual recovery of the housing market has made Fannie and Freddie profitable again. □

Wal-Mart 3Q profit up, but rolls back outlook

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wal-Mart Stores says that its third-quarter profit rose 2.8 percent, but the world's largest retailer reported a sales shortfall as its low-income shoppers feel squeezed around the globe.

The discounter also cut its outlook for the full year and issued fourth-quarter profit guidance that was below analysts' projections.

Wal-Mart is considered an economic bellwether because the retailer accounts for nearly 10 percent of nonautomotive retail spending in the U.S. The latest results show that its American households with

lower income are still struggling to juggle daily living costs with stagnant wages. Against this background, Wal-Mart is raising up its game for the holiday shopping season, which accounts for anywhere from 20 percent to 40 percent of retailers' annual revenues. Like other rivals, the discounter is kicking off the official start earlier into Thanksgiving. It also brought back its holiday layaway program and says it is sharpening prices on key holiday items even more than last year.

"The retail environment, both in stores and online, remains competitive," said Mike Duke, president and



Photo shows a Wal-Mart, in Bristol, Pa. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. reported mixed quarterly financial results on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013.

(AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

CEO of Wal-Mart Stores Inc. in a statement."

Wal-Mart has aggressive plans to help our customer

enjoy the holiday season." Wal-Mart said that it earned \$3.74 billion, or \$1.14 per share in the three-month period ended Oct. 31. That compares with \$3.64 billion, or \$1.08 per share, in the year-ago period.

Net sales rose 1.6 percent to \$114.88 billion, up 1.6 percent in the year ago period. Analysts were expecting earnings of \$1.13 per share on net sales of \$116.9 billion.

U.S. Wal-Mart stores, which account for 58 percent of the company's total sales, posted the third straight quarter of declines in a key revenue figure after six consecutive quarters of increases. □

Lockheed Martin cutting 4,000 jobs, closing plants

BETHESDA, Maryland (AP) — Lockheed Martin is cutting 4,000 jobs, about 3.5 percent of its workforce, as the defense contractor continues to look for ways to lower costs amid reduced government spending. "In the face of government budget cuts and an increasingly complex global security landscape, these actions are necessary for the future of our business,"

CEO Marilyn Hewson said Thursday in a statement. Across-the-board spending cuts by the federal government have helped trim U.S. budget deficits. Budget negotiators in Congress are holding talks centered on finding ways to cut spending and tax breaks to replace the automatic cuts that started earlier this year that are slamming the Pentagon and domestic agen-

cies. Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed Martin Corp., maker of Patriot missile defense system and the F-35 and F-16 fighter planes, will close plants in Good-year, Arizona; Akron, Ohio; Newtown, Pennsylvania; and Horizon City, Texas; as well as four buildings at its Sunnyvale, California campus, by mid-2015, eliminating 2,000 jobs.

Another 2,000 positions will

be cut in its information systems and global solutions, mission system and training, and space systems units by 2014's end.

Lockheed Martin said it will shift work and some employees to facilities in Denver and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The company is also reviewing other possible plants to which it could relocate programs, including facilities in Owego, New

York and Orlando, Florida. Lockheed Martin said it has cut its workforce to 116,000 employees from 146,000 since 2008.

Last month the company said that revenue would decline "slightly" next year on likely federal budget cuts.

Shares added 62 cents to \$137.88 in afternoon trading. The stock is up 49 percent this year. □

Viacom 4Q profit up, helped by 'World War Z' film

BREE FOWLER

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Viacom's fourth-quarter profit rose 24 percent, helped by the success of the film "World War Z" and greater advertising revenue.

President and CEO Philippe Dauman said Thursday that in addition to the box office success of the zombie movie starring Brad Pitt, the company's film division also got a boost from home movie sales related to its Star Trek and GI Joe franchises.

The New York company, which owns Nickelodeon, MTV, Comedy Central and Paramount Pictures, earned \$804 million, or \$1.68 per share, for the three months ended Sept.

30. That's up from \$650 million, or \$1.26 per share, in the same quarter the year before.

Excluding a gain on the sale of some investments,

restructuring charges and other items, Viacom's earnings from continuing operations for the quarter ended Sept. 30 totaled \$1.55 per share.



The entrance to Viacom's headquarters is shown in New York. Viacom Inc. reports quarterly earnings on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

Analysts polled by FactSet expected earnings of \$1.44 per share.

Revenue climbed 9 percent to \$3.65 billion from \$3.36 billion, beating average Wall Street predictions of \$3.58 billion.

Revenue from media networks increased 7 percent to \$2.46 billion, as domestic advertising revenue and affiliate fees rose, while filmed entertainment revenue increased 11 percent to \$1.21 billion on increases in box office revenue and home entertainment sales. Dauman noted that ratings rose year-over-year at nearly all of the company's networks during the recent quarter, including Nickelodeon, MTV, comedy central, BET and Spike.

Higher ratings allow networks to charge more for advertising.

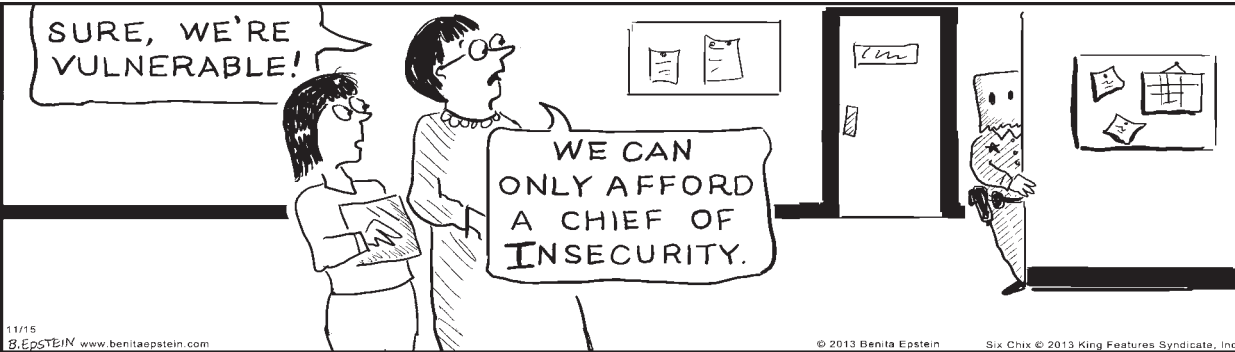
For the current quarter, Viacom said it expects "mid-single-digit" growth in advertising sales, helped by new programming that it thinks will draw in viewers.

The company also said it still expects affiliate revenue growth in the "high-single-digit to low-double-digit range" for fiscal 2014. For the full fiscal year 2013, Viacom earned \$2.4 billion, or \$4.84 per share, up from \$1.98 billion, or \$3.69 per share. Revenue fell slightly to \$13.79 billion from \$13.89 billion. Viacom shares fell \$1.35, or 1.6 percent, to \$81.81 in midday trading. They are up 53 percent so far this year. □

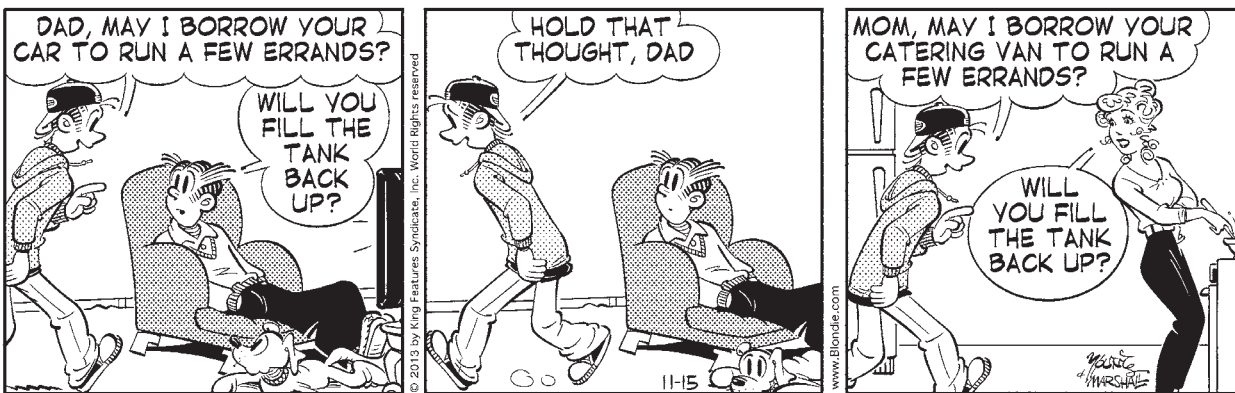
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	6		2				9	
4			8					3
	7			4				
					5			2
	3	6				8	7	
5			3					
				7			8	
3					1			4
	4				2		6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

11/15

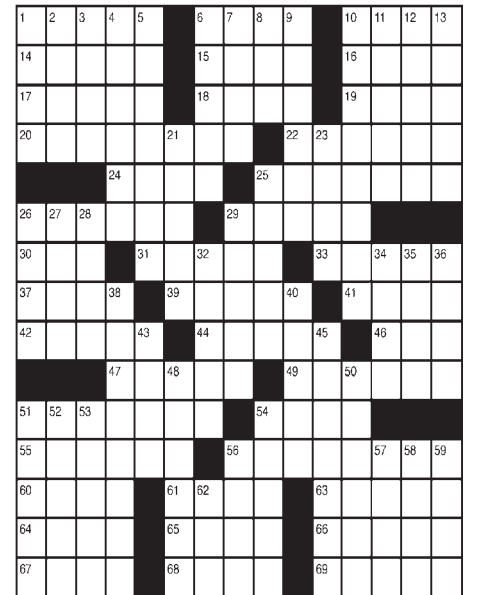
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	3	6	9	2	5	8	4	7
2	9	4	7	8	3	5	1	6
8	7	5	4	1	6	9	2	3
3	1	2	5	6	4	7	8	9
5	6	9	1	7	8	4	3	2
7	4	8	2	3	9	6	5	1
4	5	7	3	9	1	2	6	8
9	8	1	6	5	2	3	7	4
6	2	3	8	4	7	1	9	5

ACROSS

- Street surfer
- in; wearing
- One of the Three Bears
- Banishment
- Actor's part
- Elderly
- Santa's helpers
- Fumbler's word
- Use a Kindle
- Response to a stimulus
- Son in a royal family
- Fish ___; aquarium
- Little pad under a drink
- Afternoon nap
- Door fastener
- Depressed; sad
- Join, as a club
- Actor Stacy
- Thing; object
- Rarin' to go
- Grain storage tower
- Fortuneteller's deck of cards
- Eskimo canoe
- to; because of
- Peace Prize
- Kids; jokes with
- Gondola operator
- Unyielding
- Pockmark on the moon
- Covered wagon passengers
- Sheltered bay
- Make indistinct
- Arm joint
- friendly; easy to operate
- Uncommon
- Tripoli's nation
- Cincinnati team
- Filled with wonder
- Disrespectful



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

11/15/13

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

BLUR	STEVE	SORE
LOSE	WOMEN	AGOG
AGES	ONSET	DRAG
HOSIERY	READERS	
DAD	VERSE	
OCCUR	DID	INCAS
MORE	SOS	CASINO
ALE	ARTISAN	GNU
HOARDS	BAD	VAIN
ARMED	FLY	BORED
BELIE	LAY	
BROADEN	CITADEL	
RIOT	AARON	GOYA
ADZE	FLUKE	EVEN
TEES	YEMEN	REDD

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11/15/13

- Paper towel brand
- Votes into office
- Say again
- Thief
- Crazy as a
- Mont Blanc or the Matterhorn
- Powerful ruler
- Louisiana's counties
- Insurance seller
- Harmony
- Deadly snake
- Foolish
- Off-the ready-made
- Mariah or Drew
- Narrow cut
- Tiny bit
- Beverage holder
- Allowed by law
- back; surprised
- Assists
- Board game

DOWN

- Look searchingly
- Wheel rod

- Garden tools
- Ogres
- Numerical comparison
- Heavy book
- Pieces of corn
- Ms. Streisand
- Aviator Earhart
- Happen
- Got up
- Talked wildly
- Gave a pink slip to
- Untainted
- Recedes
- Rogers & Clark
- Influence
- Statute



Larry Page, Google's co-founder and chief executive, speaks during the keynote presentation at Google I/O 2013 in San Francisco.

(Associated Press)

Governments mining Google for even more personal data

MICHAEL LIEDTKE

**AP Technology Writer
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —**

Google is becoming less likely to comply with government demands for information on its users' activities as authorities in the U.S. and other countries get more aggressive about mining the Internet for personal data.

The latest snapshot emerged Thursday in a report that the company has released every six months for the past three years. Several other companies, including Microsoft Corp., Apple Inc., Facebook Inc. and Yahoo Inc., have since followed Google's practice of disclosing government requests for personal data, which cover such things as email communications and the search queries made. The breakdown for the first half of this year shows that Google Inc. received 25,879 legal requests for people's data from governments around the world. That represented a 21 percent increase from the six months before that. It's also more than twice the number of government requests that Google was fielding at the end of 2009.

U.S. authorities accounted for 10,918 of the requests during the first half of the year, more than anywhere else. They came from federal authorities as well as police departments around the country. The number has nearly tripled since the end of 2009.

"And these numbers only include the requests we're allowed to publish," wrote Richard Salgado, Google's legal director of law enforcement and information security.

The report didn't provide specifics about the number of orders that Google has been receiving through a confidential U.S. court set up under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to fight terrorism.

Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Yahoo all are suing for the right to share more detailed information about the FISA demands made by the National Security Agency and the FBI. The technology companies believe that more forthrightness will ease privacy concerns raised by NSA documents that depicted them as willing participants in a U.S. spying program dubbed PRISM. □

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girls around 1947; died shortly
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200268

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200451

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US\$4600 by week 1 bedroom
apartment at the Divi Dutch
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equipped with kitchen bedroom
and pull out couch.

1st week check in 18-19-20 Dec
2013 and check out 25-26-27
Dec 2013

2nd week check in 25-26-27
Dec. 2013 and check out 1-2-3
jan 2014

For information Call Carlos
562-4860

Jorgemendezmre@hotmail.com

Doritam5@hotmail.com

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FOR SALE week 47

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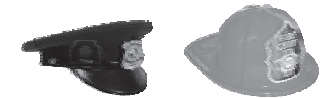
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SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
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FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
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AMBULANCE	582-1234
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Tel: 583-8989

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Destruction of Brazil's Amazon jumps 28 percent

MARCO SIBAJA
Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazil's government reported Thursday that annual destruction of its Amazon rainforest jumped by 28 percent after four straight years of declines, an increase activists said was linked to recent loosening of the nation's environmental law meant to protect the jungle.

However, the destruction was still the second-lowest amount of jungle destroyed since Brazil began tracking deforestation in 1988.

The increase in deforestation came in the August 2012 through July 2013 period, the time when Brazil annually measures the destruction of the forest by studying satellite images. The country registered its lowest level of Amazon felling the year before.

The Amazon rainforest is considered one of the world's most important natural defenses against global warming because



This Sept. 15, 2009 file photo shows a deforested area near Novo Progresso in Brazil's northern state of Para. Brazil's government says destruction of its Amazon rainforest has jumped by 28 percent. The sharp jump in deforestation came in the August 2012 through July 2013 period, the time when Brazil measures the annual destruction of the forest.

Associated Press

of its capacity to absorb huge amounts of carbon dioxide. About 75 percent of Brazil's emissions come from rainforest clearing, as vegetation burns and felled trees rot.

That releases an estimated 400 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year, making Brazil at least the sixth-biggest emitter of the gas.

Environment Minister Izabella Teixeira said Thursday that the most recent figures show 2,256 square miles (5,843 square kilometers) of rainforest were felled. That's compared to the 1,765 square miles (1,571 square kilometers) cleared the previous year.

Environmentalists blame the increase on a loosening of Brazil's environmental

laws. They also say that the government's push for big infrastructure projects like dams, roads and railways is pushing deforestation.

A bill revising the Forest Code law passed Congress last year after more than a decade of efforts by Brazil's powerful agricultural lobby to make changes to what has been one of the world's toughest environmental laws, at least on paper.

The changes mostly eased restrictions for landowners with smaller properties, allowing them to clear land closer to riverbanks and other measures. Perhaps the most controversial portion of the new law was what activists say was an amnesty, allowing those who illegally felled land to not face penalties if they signed an agreement to replant trees, which many environmentalists question could be enforced.

Paulo Adario, coordinator of Greenpeace's Amazon campaign, said that it was scandalous that there was

such a spike in the destruction.

"The government can't be surprised by this increase in deforestation, given that their own action is what's pushing it," he said. "The change in the Forest Code and the resulting amnesty for those who illegally felled the forest sent the message that such crimes have no consequences."

Adario also said the Rousseff government's strong push for infrastructure projects in the Amazon region was leading to increased deforestation, and Thursday's government report showed that much of the destruction was centered along a government-improved roadway running through the states of Para and Mato Grosso.

Better roads make it easier to illegally extract timber from the jungle and push more soy farmers and ranchers, who clear trees so they can work land and plant pasture, into previously untouched areas. □

Scientists warn of hot, sour, breathless oceans

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Greenhouse gases are making the world's oceans hot, sour and breathless, and the way those changes work together is creating a grimmer outlook for global waters, according to a new report Wednesday from 540 international scientists.

The world's oceans are getting more acidic at an unprecedented rate, faster than at any time in the past 300 million years, the report said. But it's how this interacts with other global warming impacts on waters that scientists say is getting them even more worried.

Scientists already had calculated how the oceans had become 26 percent more acidic since the 1880s because of the increased carbon in the water. They

also previously had measured how the world's oceans had warmed because of carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and gas. And they've observed that at different depths the oceans were moving less oxygen around because of the increased heat.

But together "they actually amplify each other," said report co-author Ulf Riebesell, a biochemist at the Geomar Helmholtz Center for Ocean Research in Germany. He said scientists are increasingly referring to the ocean's future prospects as "hot, sour and breathless."

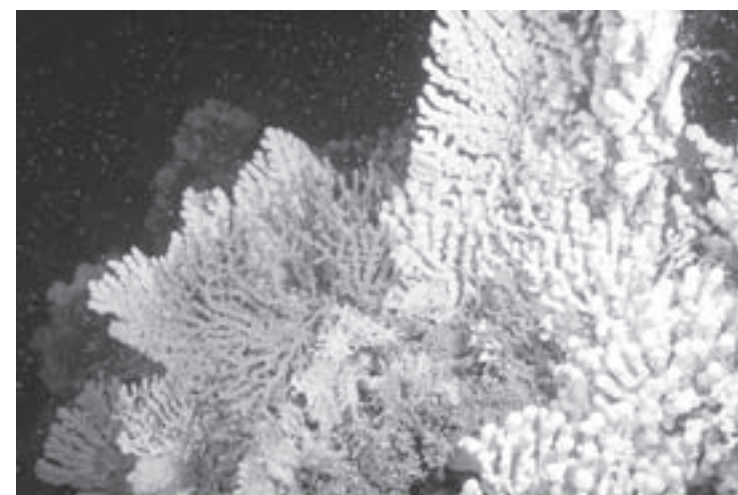
The 26-page report released by the United Nations and several scientific research organizations brings together the latest ocean science on climate change, related to a major

conference of ocean scientists last year.

For example, off the U.S. Pacific coast, the way the ocean is becoming stratified and less mixed means lower oxygen in the water, and the latest studies show that means "80 percent more acidification than what was originally predicted," said study co-author Richard Feely of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Marine Environmental Lab in Seattle.

The theory is that species like squid can only live in waters at certain temperature, acidity and oxygen levels, and the sweet spots where the factors combine are getting harder to find, Feely and Riebesell said.

The world ocean pH already has gone from 8.1 to 8.0 — it's considered a 26 percent increase in acidity



This undated photo provided by GEOMAR shows a Norwegian coral reef with gorgonian and stony corals in Norway.

Associated Press

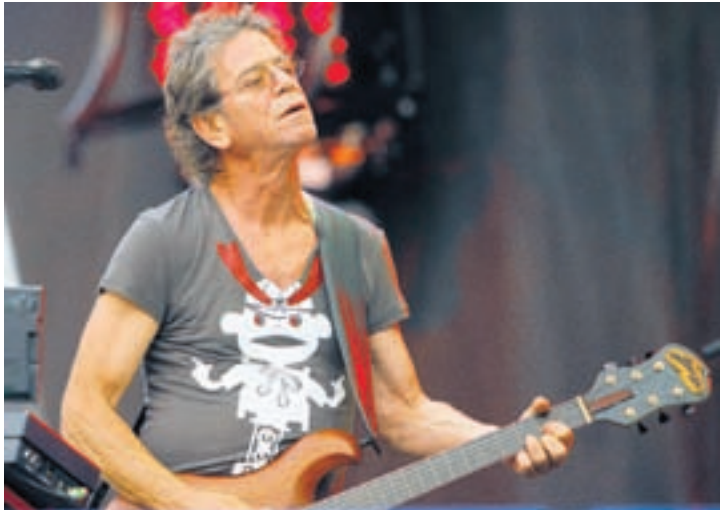
because scientists measure hydrogen ions for this. But computer models predict the world will hit 8.0 in the next 20 years to 30 years and 7.9 in about 50 years, Riebesell said. At those lev-

els shells of some mollusks, like clams and mussels, start corroding, he said.

"This is another loss that we're facing," Riebesell said. "It's going to affect human society." □



Rolling Stone's DeCurtis working on Lou Reed bio



In this Sunday, Aug. 9, 2009 file photo, Lou Reed performs at the Lollapalooza music festival, in Chicago.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP)—Longtime music writer and Rolling Stone critic Anthony DeCurtis is writing a biography of Lou Reed. Little, Brown and Co. announced Thursday that it had acquired a book by DeCurtis. The writer interviewed Reed numerous times and wrote the liner notes for an anthology of songs by the group Reed led in the 1960s, the Velvet Underground.

Little, Brown bills the biography as offering "the inside story" of the brilliant and contentious artist. The book is currently untitled and doesn't yet have a release date. Reed, one of the most influential musicians of the past 50 years, died Oct. 27 at age 71. He was known for such songs as "Walk On the Wild Side," "Heroin" and "Pale Blue Eyes." □

McCartney urges Putin to free Greenpeace detainees

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Paul McCartney cited the lyrics of "Back in the USSR" on Thursday as he urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to release 30 people arrested during a Greenpeace protest at an Arctic oil rig almost two months ago.

In a letter, the former Beatle told Putin that he wrote his playful homage to the former Soviet Union in 1968, "back when it wasn't fashionable for English people to say nice things about your country."

Quoting the song's line "Gee it's good to be back home," McCartney asked: "Could you make that come true for the Greenpeace prisoners?"

The 28 protesters, as well as a photographer and a videographer working for Greenpeace, were detained aboard their ship, the Arctic Sunrise, on Sept. 18 after staging a protest at an oil rig owned by Russia's Gazprom state ener-



Paul McCartney, along with his wife Nancy Shevell, watches a sumo match on the fifth day of the Kyushu Grand Sumo Tournament, in Fukuoka, western Japan, Thursday, Nov. 14, 2013.

Associated Press

gy giant.

They were initially charged with piracy. That was later downgraded to hooliganism, which carries a maximum sentence of seven years in prison.

In the letter, posted on McCartney's official website, the musician cited his long association with Russia, in-

cluding an outdoor concert in Red Square in 2003. On that occasion, Putin gave McCartney a personally guided tour of the Kremlin.

McCartney told Putin he hoped they would meet again, "when our schedules allow."

He said Greenpeace, which stages direct-action protests against alleged environmental offenders around the world, was nonviolent and "most certainly not an anti-Russian organization. In my experience they tend to annoy every government!"

"I understand of course that the Russian courts and the Russian presidency are separate," McCartney wrote. "Nevertheless I wonder if you may be able to use whatever influence you have to reunite the detainees with their families?" An outspoken vegetarian, McCartney has long supported environmental causes, and he has opposed drilling for oil in the Arctic. □

New app chronicles Lennon's sailing trip

DAVID BAUDER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Six months before he died, John Lennon set sail from Newport, R.I., on an ocean adventure to Bermuda that awakened his desire to make music again and is now being chronicled in an electronic format he could not have conceived of.

A new app, "John Lennon: The Bermuda Tapes," is being offered for sale on Apple devices Thursday for \$4.99. It's loaded with interactive features, music, photos and interviews that detail a relatively unexamined slice of the former Beatle's life.

More important, it opens the door to a potentially potent new creative outlet for musicians and the struggling industry.

Users of the app can simulate the six-day journey

through the recollections of two crew members and Lennon himself, in a Playboy interview conducted shortly after the trip. They can virtually visit the disco where Lennon heard a recording of The B-52s' "Rock Lobster," which reminded him of his wife Yoko Ono's music and coaxed him back to work. They can eavesdrop on the creative process as Lennon's last recordings took shape.

The project's director, "LennonNYC" filmmaker Michael Epstein, said he wanted to recreate the experience of becoming immersed in a record album, which he feels is lost in a world of electronic music files.

"That relationship that MP3s have severed, we tried to put back together," he said.

Lennon's wife had encour-



In this April 2, 1973 file photo, John Lennon and his wife, Yoko Ono, speak at a news conference in New York. Six months before he died, Lennon set sail from Newport, R.I., on an ocean adventure to Bermuda that awakened his desire to make music again and is now being chronicled in an electronic format he could not have conceived of.

Associated Press

aged John to take the Bermuda trip in June 1980, which turned into a deeply cathartic experience.

"He was a macho guy in a very old-fashioned way and he just wanted to conquer things," Ono said.

"And he did. It was amazing."

A few days into the trip they ran into a strong storm. Two crew members became violently seasick and the captain, Hank Halsted, succumbed to exhaustion. A

rock star and novice sailor was left to keep the "Megan Jaye" afloat despite the wind and waves. The crew members remember Lennon singing sea chanteys as he steered the ship to safety.

The experience gave Lennon some pride at a time in his life when he was having some issues with self-confidence, she said.

"It opened up a kind of frozen part of his soul and he started creating," she said. Lennon excitedly called Yoko after hearing "Rock Lobster" and they started writing songs together in a sort of call-and-response style, with Ono back in New York. The result became the "Double Fantasy" album. Epstein interviews B-52s members for the app and they discuss the influence she had on their music. □

'Best Man Holiday' revives Morris Chestnut's lure

JESSICA HERNDON

AP Film Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Back in 2012, while filming "The Best Man Holiday," Morris Chestnut and Nia Long became increasingly nostalgic.

It had been 14 years since the release of Malcolm D. Lee's 1999 hit, "The Best Man," and 21 years since the actors were first-time co-stars in John Singleton's street-life classic "Boyz n the Hood."

"There was a moment when we were shooting in a limo and Nia looked at me and said, 'You are a man now!'" recalled Chestnut with a chuckle during a recent interview. "We are in such different places in our lives and careers now. We're fortunate to still be here."

Chestnut, Long and the entire original cast of "The Best Man" — Taye Diggs, Terrence Howard, Sanaa Lathan, Harold Perrineau, Regina Hall, Monica Calhoun and Melissa De Sousa — return in the Christmas-themed "The Best Man Holiday," opening Friday.

Although other follow-up



In this Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013 file photo, actor Morris Chestnut arrives on the red carpet for the world premiere of the feature film "The Best Man Holiday," at the TCL Chinese Theatre, in Los Angeles. The movie releases in theaters Friday, Nov. 15, 2013.

Associated Press

films have come years after their originals — September's "Riddick," for example — the long-awaited "Best Man" reunion is a relatively rare feat, especially for a predominantly African-American cast.

"When the DVD market went down (in 2009), there were less and less urban movies getting made," said Chestnut of the lack of black ensemble films. "Tyler Perry was the only one really making (these) movies."

Lee, "The Best Man Holiday's" writer-director, struggled to get his sequel backed by a studio. Still, Universal Pictures went for the film, but only after the entire cast came to the studio for a reading.

"They understood what the movie was and what it could be," said Lee of the studio's response to the reading. "However, we know it's hard to get people to go see a film with a primarily black cast that doesn't star Will Smith or Denzel Washington."

When Chestnut portrayed Ricky Baker in 1991's "Boyz n the Hood," he became a talked-about young actor on the rise. After landing a few supporting parts in films like "The Inkwell" and "G.I. Jane," he won leading roles in "The Brothers" and "Two Can Play That Game" and was soon type-cast as the heartthrob.

"At the time, I didn't realize I was doing all romantic comedies," said Chestnut. "But I'd go to set and not really respect what I was doing. I didn't see it as a challenge. It was like, 'Go sit there and kiss Vivica Fox."

Go sit there and joke with Gabrielle Union.'"

Though he became a household name among African-Americans, Chestnut didn't have the box office draw of a Smith or Washington.

"I woke up one day and was like, 'OK, I had fun, but I didn't really fit anything meaningful in there,'" Chestnut said. "It was a lesson learned."

He's since appeared in films like "Think Like a Man," "Identity Thief" and "Ladder 49," and on TV shows such as "V," "American Horror Story" and "Nurse Jackie." But he still fights for roles.

"It's a never-ending story," said Chestnut, who admires the talent of "Best Man" co-star Howard.

"He's a different cat," Chestnut said of the Oscar-nominated actor. "We call Terrence the beautiful mind because sometimes a person can be so brilliant that it is hard for them to stay focused. ... When you say 'action' he is so phenomenally present, but when you say 'cut,' he is phenomenally detached."



This file photo provided by Sotheby's shows "Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)" by Andy Warhol. The silkscreen print with multiple photos of the aftermath of a car which collided into a tree measures 8 feet by 13 feet and is part of Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series.

Associated Press

JAKE PEARSON

ULA ILNYTZKY

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A prized 1963 Andy Warhol painting that captures the immediate aftermath of a car crash sold for \$105 million at a New York City auction, shattering the record for the famed pop artist amid a spending frenzy at the

high end of the art world.

The 8- by 13-foot (3.96-meter) painting titled "Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)" depicts a twisted body sprawled across a car's mangled interior. It has only been seen once in public in the past 26 years. Sotheby's, which conducted the auction Wednesday, did not immediately

Andy Warhol painting fetches record \$105M at U.S. auction

identify the buyer.

The previous Warhol auction record was set in 2007 when "Green Car Crash (Green Burning Car I)" sold for \$71.7 million.

Another iconic Warhol, "Coca-Cola (3)," sold for \$57.2 million Tuesday at Christie's auction house, and his portrait of Elizabeth Taylor titled "Liz #1 (Early Colored Liz)" sold for \$20 million Wednesday.

A Willem de Kooning abstract painting in red, yellow and white called "Untitled V," not seen in public since 1980, sold for \$24.8 million Wednesday. The sale fell short of the record for the artist's works, set Tuesday at Christie's with the sale of his "Untitled VIII" from 1977.

None of Wednesday's buy-

ers was identified.

The Warhol record came just a day after the most expensive work of art ever sold at auction went for \$142.4 million to conclude six minutes of feverish bidding at Christie's. The hefty price tag for a 1967 Francis Bacon triptych called "Three Studies of Lucian Freud" shattered the previous world record — nearly \$120 million paid for Edvard Munch's "The Scream" at a 2012 Sotheby's sale.

Christie's said the winning bid went to New York City's Acquavella Galleries. It is believed that the gallery was buying it for an unidentified client.

Over the past 10 days, auction houses around the world have presided over bids totaling nearly \$2 bil-

lion for art and jewelry, Sotheby's said. Christie's said Tuesday's sale brought in more than \$691.5 million, the highest total for any single auction in history.

Buyers from Asia, the Middle East and Russia play a big role in the contemporary art market, said Richard Feigen, an art dealer and collector whose Manhattan gallery has works spanning from the 14th century to contemporary art.

"The demand for seminal works by historical important artists is truly unquestionable, and we will keep witnessing new records being broken," said Michael Frahm, a contemporary art adviser and partner at the London-based Frahm Ltd. "This is the ultimate trophy hunting."

The Extra Legroom Society



FRANK BRUNI
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For our time off together around Christmas, my siblings, their children and I recently began plotting an excursion to the Six Flags amusement park in the Los Angeles area. The discussion turned quickly from roller coasters to perks. To status. To just how high we're prepared to fly in this service-obsessed, luxury-laden, class-fractured era of ours.

Do we occupy the dizziest heights of privilege? Or is ours a humbler altitude, and by how much? Six Flags doesn't use that language, but it might as well, because it offers some half-dozen gradations of access and coddling, from a high-priced position near the front of every line to a much less expensive ticket and much longer waits. There are levels - regular, gold, platinum - and they suggest that the experience is more than just a sprawling day of dips, whirls and happy shrieks. It's a referendum on your very station in society. I don't recall anything quite like it from the amusement parks of my youth. Back then our lives as consumers, and as Americans, didn't seem so relentlessly tiered.

Much has been made of commercial flights these days, with all those divisions between first class and coach. For various supplements or with various deals, you can get a few more inches of legroom or, shy of that, a prime aisle seat. You can get to board earlier or later, and thus hoard or miss out on the overhead bins. Will it be long before there's a ranked queue for the bathroom? I'm not even sure I'm kidding. It's not that pecking orders or badges of affluence are anything new. Our homes, cars, clubs and clothes have long been advertisements of our economic clout, used and perceived that way.

But lately, the places and ways in which Americans are economically segregated and stratified have multiplied, with microclimates of exclusivity popping up everywhere. The plane mirrors the sports arena, the theater, the gym. Is it any wonder that class tensions simmer? In a country of rising income inequality and an economy that's moved from manufacturing to services, one thing we definitely make in abun-

dance is distinctions.

When I grew up, school essentially came in two sizes: public or private. Now, private is a starting point, with many costly but broadly employed add-ons: the tutor for specific subjects; the tutor for SATs; the individual sports coach; the college-admissions consultant, whose fee can exceed \$5,000.

With taxis as with Boeings, there are degrees of pampering. Uber, a relatively new car service in dozens of American cities, allows you to specify, just minutes before your vehicle's arrival, precisely how regal and roomy it should be. If you see yourself in an SUV, then an SUV is the chariot in which others will see you, too.

Broadway theaters have premium seating, which is so expensive that a high roller can often get the best real estate at the last minute. It's as if scalping has come out of the closet, louder and prouder in an age of unapologetic elitism. Luxury boxes now take up more space in stadiums than ever; elsewhere in some ballparks, the differences between sections involve not just better views but finer food and a more solicitous staff.

No sooner does a fitness trend appear than it spawns strata, so that you can spin in candlelight at SoulCycle, in less gilded trappings at Crunch, or in barebones fashion at the YMCA. There's an accordant price scale. Even the fanciest gyms have rungs of enhanced fanciness, such as executive locker rooms. At Equinox, trainers are designated by numbers - Tiers 1, 2 and 3 - that signal their experience and hourly rate, and there are deluxe inner sanctums within certain Equinox clubs. They use eye-scanning technology to figure out who belongs.

Bronze, silver, gold, platinum: a vocabulary once associated with jewelry or Olympic medals is now attached to your Hertz status, your Delta level, your Obamacare plan, establishing how far forward or back in the pack you belong, herding you into categories that sound suspiciously like evaluations of worth. This is how precious you are.

And while part of what's happening is just a refinement of niche marketing and personalized service for the wealthiest Americans at the tip of the top, the stratification travels beyond and below that echelon, to communal events at which everyone can see which plateau everyone else inhabits, Six Flags being an example.

It has something called The Flash Pass, named for the superhero. A regular version of it costs at least \$50 on top of general admission, but for at least \$80, you get faster access to rides, and for \$110, you get that plus the ability to go around on a ride twice in a row. Your second spin pre-empts some eager, nearby aspirant's first.

For reasons besides thrift, my vote is that my family not go that route. □



The Plot Against France



PAUL KRUGMAN
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On Friday last week, Standard & Poor's, the bond-rating agency, downgraded France. The move made headlines, with many reports suggesting that France is in crisis. But markets yawned: French borrowing costs, which are near historic lows, barely budged.

So what's going on here? The answer is that S&P's action needs to be seen in the context of the broader politics of fiscal austerity. And I do mean politics, not economics. For the plot against France - I'm being a bit tongue in cheek here, but there really are a lot of people trying to bad-mouth the place - is one clear demonstration that in Europe, as in America, fiscal scolds don't really care about deficits. Instead, they're using debt fears to advance an ideological agenda. And France, which refuses to play along, has become the target of incessant negative propaganda.

Let me give you an idea of what we're talking about. A year ago the magazine *The Economist* declared France "the time bomb at the heart of Europe," with problems that could dwarf those of Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy. In January 2013, CNN Money's senior editor-at-large declared France in "free fall," a nation "heading toward an economic Bastille." Similar sentiments can be found all over economic newsletters.

Given such rhetoric, one comes to French data expecting to see

the worst. What you find instead is a country experiencing economic difficulties - who isn't? - but in general performing as well as or better than most of its neighbors, with the admittedly big exception of Germany. Recent French growth has been sluggish, but much better than that of, say, the Netherlands, which is still rated AAA. According to standard estimates, French workers were actually a bit more productive than their German counterparts a dozen years ago - and guess what, they still are.

Meanwhile, French fiscal prospects look distinctly nonalarming. The budget deficit has fallen sharply since 2010, and the International Monetary Fund expects the ratio of debt to GDP to be roughly stable over the next five years.

What about the longer-run burden of an aging population? This is a problem in France, as it is in all wealthy nations. But France has a higher birthrate than most of Europe - in part because of government programs that encourage births and ease the lives of working mothers - so that its demographic projections are much better than those of its neighbors, Germany included. Meanwhile, France's remarkable health care system, which delivers high quality at low cost, is going to be a big fiscal advantage looking forward. By the numbers, then, it's hard to see why France deserves any particular opprobrium. So again, what's going on?

Here's a clue: Two months ago Olli Rehn, Europe's commissioner for economic and monetary affairs - and one of the prime movers behind harsh austerity policies - dismissed France's seemingly exemplary fiscal policy. Why? Because it was based on tax increases rather than spending cuts - and tax hikes, he declared, would "destroy growth and handicap the creation of jobs."

In other words, never mind what

I said about fiscal discipline, you're supposed to be dismantling the safety net.

S&P's explanation of its downgrade, though less clearly stated, amounted to the same thing: France was being downgraded because "the French government's current approach to budgetary and structural reforms to taxation, as well as to product, services and labor markets, is unlikely to substantially raise France's medium-term growth prospects." Again, never mind the budget numbers, where are the tax cuts and deregulation?

You might think that Rehn and S&P were basing their demands on solid evidence that spending cuts are in fact better for the economy than tax increases. But they weren't. In fact, research at the IMF suggests that when you're trying to reduce deficits in a recession, the opposite is true: temporary tax hikes do much less damage than spending cuts.

Oh, and when people start talking about the wonders of "structural reform," take it with a large heaping of salt. It's mainly a code phrase for deregulation - and the evidence on the virtues of deregulation is decidedly mixed. Remember, Ireland received high praise for its structural reforms in the 1990s and 2000s; in 2006 George Osborne, now Britain's chancellor of the Exchequer, called it a "shining example." How did that turn out?

If all this sounds familiar to American readers, it should. U.S. fiscal scolds turn out, almost invariably, to be much more interested in slashing Medicare and Social Security than they are in actually cutting deficits. Europe's austerians are now revealing themselves to be pretty much the same. France has committed the unforgivable sin of being fiscally responsible without inflicting pain on the poor and unlucky. And it must be punished. □

New U.N. brigade's stance in Africa brings success, and risks

**NICHOLAS KULISH
SOMINI SENGUPTA**

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KIWANJA, Democratic Republic of Congo - When Martin Kobler, the newly appointed United Nations representative, arrived this summer for his first visit to this small but strategic town, armed members of the M23 rebel group lined the airstrip, silently watch-

German career diplomat and special representative of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "You have to find new instruments to restore the peace."

The new instrument in question was the Force Intervention Brigade, made up of 3,000 soldiers from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi. Rather than waiting for attacks, the U.N. Secu-

took place in this very town in 2008. For the moment, the gamble appears to have paid off, even as it raises new risks.

The pitfalls of backing one side in such a conflict were on full display this week after the Congolese government walked out on peace talks with the rebels.

"Despite a change in the military situation, it is im-

peacekeeping chief from 2000 to 2008, and under whose watch its blue helmets were overwhelmed by rebel forces in eastern Congo.

The shift could have broad implications for peacekeeping operations all over the world. Nearly 100,000 uniformed personnel serve under the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Opera-

Doctors Without Borders in Brussels. "In this case it's not even a blurring of the lines." Guéhenno, who now teaches at Columbia University, warned against relying too much on force, saying that the key to ending the war in Congo, is persuading regional leaders to cooperate, out of their own mutual self-interest.

"It's not a SWAT team that's going to clean up a bad neighborhood," Guéhenno said. "That requires politics."

A more aggressive approach could also alienate countries like India and Uruguay, which have traditionally sent many troops to serve in U.N. operations. Such countries see peacekeeping missions as a way to get training, equipment and extra pay for their forces with relatively little risk of casualties.

"Some of the troop-contributing countries are quite uneasy with what they see as the direction peacekeeping is taking," said a senior U.N. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk publicly.

The Security Council was "careful to say it was not a precedent, but every time you say that that's exactly what you're making," the official said.

Kobler's military counterpart in Congo, whom he describes as his "twin," Lt. Gen. Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, has used all the soldiers under his command more aggressively and said that he has no plan to change tactics.

"We are going to exercise our mandate to the maximum possible, not only against M23, against all the groups," Cruz said. "When we finish one problem, we are in our heads thinking about the next step."

Dozens of armed groups remain in eastern Congo, a region where millions have died in a war that has drawn in the country's neighbors and raged for two decades.

The Congolese army is also part of the problem: It has been cited for wide-ranging human rights abuses for years. □



A United Nations helicopter carrying a high-level delegation travels to the town of Kiwanja in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a major departure from the often passive approach that has given U.N. peacekeepers a bad reputation, the U.N. Security Council authorized a brigade to "neutralize armed groups" in the country instead of waiting for attacks.

(Pete Muller/The New York Times)

ing him land and disembark. Their presence sent an unmistakable message: the rebels, not Congolese officials, controlled Kiwanja.

But when he landed at the end of October, he was greeted instead by crowds of cheering civilians. The armed fighters who had terrorized them were nowhere in sight. Congolese forces, supported by U.N. peacekeepers, had routed the rebels and restored control of the town to the central government.

"Our task is to dissolve political blockage, to end occupation by armed forces, to restore state authority, to bring back hope to the people," said Kobler, a

rity Council authorized the troops to "neutralize armed groups." It was a major departure from the often passive approach that has given peacekeepers a bad reputation, from failing to prevent the slaughter of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica to not intervening to stop the massacres of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda.

Those instructions, delivered with rare agreement among members of the Council, were certainly a gamble. They aimed not only to restore hope to the long-suffering people of Congo, but also to rehabilitate the image of the U.N. peacekeepers, under whose watch a massacre

portant that there be a political conclusion to the dialogue," said a group of envoys representing the international community in a statement Monday, including Kobler and his counterparts from the United States, the African Union and the European Union.

Still, the intervention brigade, combined with forceful diplomatic pressure and financial incentives for neighboring Rwanda, has made a dent in a seemingly endless war.

"I think it has contributed to rebuilding the credibility of the U.N., which was almost nonexistent in the Congo after years of humiliation," said Jean-Marie Guéhenno, who was the U.N.

tions, from the Western Sahara and Haiti to the island of Cyprus and the mountains of Kashmir.

The decision to send the blue helmets into offensive operations has not met with universal approval. Humanitarian aid organizations worry that the shift could put their workers at risk because armed groups will not distinguish between soldiers and those who feed, heal and house civilians in war.

"You can have a helicopter one day used to deliver the Force Intervention Brigade troops to attack a village and next day to deliver aid to that same village," said Michiel Hofman, senior humanitarian specialist for